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The following leaves have been added. Binding to


- a 1+2 in facsimile  
 a 8 original leaf  
 d 1 " "  
 e 4 " "  
 F 3 " "  
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- I, facsimile

This copy is in the original state quite unmarked  
 & crisp. A few leaves have been sized only.



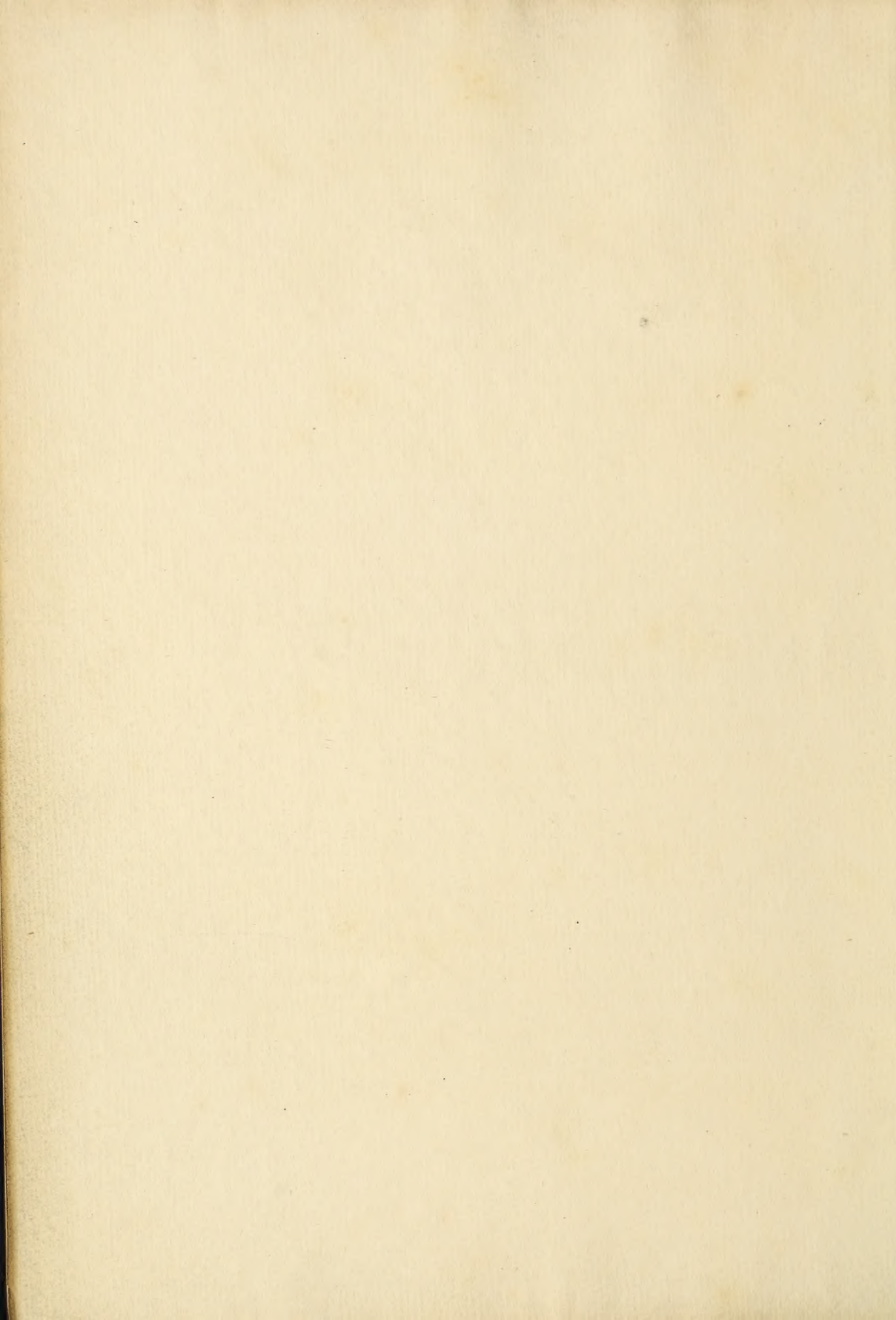






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Re te thankes laude and honoure ought to be ye  
 By vnto the clerkes poetes and historiagraphs  
 that haue writen many noble bokes of wisdom  
 of the kynges passions and miracles of holy seyn  
 tes of histories of noble and famous actes & faittes. And  
 of the cronicles sithen the begynnynge of the creacion of  
 the worlde vnto this present tyme. By whiche we ben dai  
 ly enfourmed and haue knowlege of manye thynges. of  
 whom we shuld nat haue knowen yf they had nat left to  
 vs theire monimentes writen. Among whom and ine  
 special to fore alle other we ought to gyue a singuler lau  
 de vnto that noble and gret philosopher Geffrey chaunce  
 the whiche for his ornate writing in oure tonge may wel  
 haue the name of a laureate poete. For to fore that he by  
 his laboure enberisshid ornated and made faire our engli  
 she in this Realme was hadde rude speche & incongru as  
 yet it apperithe by olde bokes. whiche at this daie oughte  
 nat to haue place ne be compared among his beauteous  
 volumes & ornate writings. Of whom he made many a  
 noble historye as wele in metre as in ryme and prose and  
 theym so craftely made that he comprehended his maters.  
 in short quicke and high sentences eschewing prolixite &  
 casting away the chaf and superfluite & shewing the py  
 hed grayne of sentence stered by crafty & sugred eloquen  
 ce. Of whom I among alle other of his bokes the boke of  
 the tales of Canterburie in whiche ben many a noble hi  
 storie of wisdom policie mirth and gentilnes. And also  
 of vertue and holynes. whiche boke diligently oursen &  
 duely examined by the polittike reason and our sight. of  
 my worshipful master William Caxton accordinge to the  
 entent and effecte of the seid Geffrey Chaunce. and by a  
 cōpy of the seid master Caxton purpos to imprent. By ye  
 grace ayde and suppozte of almighty god. whom I hum



## Prohmye

Wylly be seche. that he of his grete and habundant grace wil  
so dispose that I may it fynisse to his plesure laude and  
gloze. And that alle we that shalle therin se or rede may  
so take & vnderstonde the gode and vertuous tales that it  
may so profite to the helth of oure soules. and in especial  
of the soule of the seid Geffrey chaunce first antour & ma  
rez of this for seid boke. that after this short and transi  
torie lyfe we may come to the enurlasting lyf in hevyne  
Amen.

By Richard Pynson.

Joshua H. Benton Ed.  
Oct. 17, 1941  
5

XXQ.404.32



## Prologue

W        Than that Aprille with his showres sote  
The droughete of marche hath persed the rote  
And bathed euery beyne in suche licoure  
Of whiche vertue engendred is the floure

Whanne zepharius eke with his sote brethe  
Enspired hath in euery holt and heth  
The tendre croppes and the yong sonne  
Bathe in the ram half his cours yronne  
And smale foules make melodye  
That steppyn al nyght with open eye  
So prieth theym nature in their corages  
Than longyn folke to goon on pilgramages  
And palmers to seke straunge strondes  
To serue hawkes couthe in sondry londes  
And specially fro euery shypres ende  
Of england to Caunterburpe they wende  
The holy blisful martir for to seke  
That theym hath holpy when they wer seke  
ysel in that season on a day

B        In suthwerke at the taberde as I lay  
Redy to wenden on my pylgrymage  
To caunterburpe with deuoute corage  
That nyght came into that hostelrye  
Were nyne and twenty in a company  
Of sondry folk by auenture yfalle  
In felauschip and pilgrymes were they alle  
That toward caunterbury wolde ryde  
The chambrys and the stables were wyde  
And wele were we eased at the best  
And shortly when the sonne was at rest  
So hadde I spoken with theym euirichone  
That I was of their felauschip anone  
And made forwarde ertly for to ryse



## Prologue

To take oure wey there as I you deuise  
But neuertheles whiles I haue tyme and space  
Or that I ferther in this tale pace  
We thinketh it accordant to reason  
To telle you al the condicion  
Of ech of theym so as it semed me  
And whiche they were and of what degre  
And in what aray eke they weren ynn  
And at a knyght thenne I wille begynne



a knyght there was a worthy man  
That fro the tyme that he first began  
To riden oute, he loued cheualrye  
Trouthe and honoure fredom and curtesye  
ful worthy he was in his lordes werre  
And therto hadde he ryden no man ferre  
And as wele in cristendome as in hethnesse  
And euir hadde honoure for his worthynesse  
At alisaundre he was when it was wonne



Fulle ofte tyme he hadde the borde begonne  
 Abouen alle nations in price  
 In lettowe hadde he reysed and in Ruse  
 In garnade at the sette eke hadde he be  
 At algeyir and ryden in Belmarpe  
 At lepeys was he and eke at Satalpe  
 Whan they were wonne and in the grete see  
 At many a noble arme hadde he be  
 In mortayl bataillies hadde he be systene  
 And foughe for oure feyth at Trampssene  
 In listes thryes and ay sleyn his foo  
 This yke worthy knyght hadde he also  
 Som tyme with the lorde of palathye  
 Ageyn a nother hethen man in Turkye  
 And euirmore he hadde a souerayn price  
 And though he was worthy he was wise  
 And of his spozte as meke as a mayde  
 He neuir yete no vilanye he said  
 In alle his lyf vnto no maner wight  
 He was a very gentyl parfite knyght  
 For to telle you of his arape  
 His horse were gode but he was nat gaye  
 Of fustian he were a gyppeon  
 Alle he smered with his habergeon  
 For he was late come fro his byage  
 And sent for to do his pilgramage





w yth him there was his sonne a yong squyer  
 A luer and a lusty bacheler.  
 With lokes crulle as they were leyde in presse  
 Of twenty yere of age he was y gesse  
 Of his stature he was of euene lengtht  
 And wonderly de lyuer and of grete strenght  
 And he hadde be som tyme in cheuauche  
 In flaundres. in Artoyse and in pycardye  
 And bozne him wele as of a knyght space  
 In hope to stonden in his ladies grace  
 Embrowded was he as it were a mede  
 All fulle of freshe floures white and rede  
 Synginge he was or slopyng alle the daie  
 He was as freshe as is the moneth of may  
 Short was his golwe with sleues long and wyde  
 Wele coude he sitte on hors and therto faire ryde  
 He coude songes make and wele endite  
 Douste and daunce portraie and eke write

So hote he loued that by nyghter tafe  
 He slepte nomore than the nyghtingale  
 Curteys he was lowy and serupfable  
 He carft heforne his fadre at the table



a yeman hadde he and seruauntes nomo  
 At that tyme for he list to ryde soo  
 And he was cladde in cote and hode of grene  
 A sheef of pecok arowes bright and shene  
 Vndre his belt he bare ful thristely  
 Wele coude he dresse his tahyl pomanly  
 His arowes drouped nat with fethers lowe  
 And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe  
 A not hede he hadde with a broune visage  
 Of wodemannes craft coude he alle the vsage  
 Vpon his arme he bare a gay bracez  
 And by his syde a suerde and a bokelez  
 And on that othez side a gay dagger  
 Harnesed wele and sharp as poyn te of spere



A cristofer on his Brest of siluer shene  
 An horne he baar the ba wdryk was of grene  
 A foster was he sothly as I gesse



Her was also a nonne a pric: se  
 That of her synkynge was symple and hop  
 Her grettest othe was by saint loy  
 And she was clepyd dame Eglentyne  
 Fulle wele she songe the seruise dyuine  
 Entoynded in her boye fulle semely  
 And frenche she spake fulle fetously  
 After the scle of stratford at the bowe  
 For frenshe of Parice was to her vnknowe  
 At mete wele taught was she with alle  
 She lete no morsel fro her lippes falle  
 Ne wette her fynghers in her sauce depe  
 Wele coude she carpe a morselle of mete  
 That nodrope fel vpon her brest



## Prologue

In curteyssee was sette fulle mekyl her lest  
Her ouerlippe wiped she so clene  
That in her cuppe ther was no fertyng sene  
Of grece. Whan she hadde dronke her draught  
Fulle semely after her mete she raught  
And sekily she was of grete dysporte  
Of plesaunce and ampyable of porte  
And peyned her to countrefete there  
Of courte and to be statey of manere  
And to be holde digne of reuerence  
But for to speke of her conscience  
She was so cheritable and so pyteous  
She wolde wepe if that she sawe a mouse  
Raught in trappe if it were dede or bledde  
Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde  
With roost fleshe or mylke or wastel brede  
But sore wept she if any of theym were dede  
Or if men smote theym with yerde smert  
And alle was conscience and tendre herte  
Fulle semely her wympyrpyched was  
Her nose tretise her eyen grey as glas  
Her mouth smal and therto soft and rede  
But spheerly she hadde a faire forehede  
It was almost a spanne brode & trowe  
For hardly she was nat bnder growe  
Fulle fetyce was her cloke as & was waaz  
Of smalle coralle aboute her arme she bare  
A peyre of bedes . gauded alle with grene  
And there on heng a broche fulle shene  
On whiche first was writte a crowned A  
And after that Amor vincit omnia  
A nother nonne with her hath she  
That was her chapeleyn and prests thre





A Monke ther was fapz for the maistre  
 An oute ryder that loued were benoꝝpe  
 A manly man to be an abbote able  
 Fulle many a deynthe horſe hadde he in ſtable  
 And when he rode men myght his bridel here  
 Gyngling and whiſpyng in the winde clere  
 And eke as lowde as doth the chapel belle  
 There as this lord was he par of the cille  
 Of the reule of ſeint Maure and of ſeint Benet  
 Bicauſe he held it ſom what olde and ſtrepte  
 This ilke monke lete olde thinges pace  
 And helde after the new worlde the ſpace  
 He paſ nat of the tēte a pulled henne  
 That ſeyth that hunters be nat holy men  
 Ne that a monke when he is recheleſſe  
 Iſyke to a fiſſhe when it is waterleſſe  
 This is to ſey a monke oute of a cloyſtre



## Prologne

But that tēte herde he nat worthlan opstre  
And I sey that his opunyon was gode  
What shulde he studie and make him wode  
Upon a boke alwey in cloystre to poure  
Or swynke with his hondes and labour  
As austyn hiddeth how shulde the worlde be serued  
Yet Austyn haue his swynke to him reserved  
Therfore he was a prycafour a right  
Greshoundes he hadde as swift as foule on flight  
Of pryking and of huntynge for the hare  
Was alle his lust for no cost wolde he spare  
I sawe his sleues purfied at the honde  
With grice and that the fynest of a londe  
And to fasten his hode bndre the chynne  
He hadde of golde wrought a curpous pynne  
A loue knotte in the gretter ende ther was  
His hede was halled which shone as glas  
And eke his face as he hadde been anoynte  
He was a lorde fatte and in gode poynte  
His eyen steep and rolling in his hede  
That stempd as a furney of a lede  
His botes sowple his hors in grette estate  
Nowe certeynly he was a fayre priate  
He was nat pale as a fourepynded goost  
A fat swan loued he best of any roste  
His palfrey was as broune as a berry





Frere ther Was a Wanton and a merey  
 A limptoure and a ful solemne man  
 In alle the ordres foure is none that can  
 Somothe of dalpauce and faire langage  
 He hadde made fulle many a faire mariage  
 Of yong Wymmen at his owen cost  
 Vnto his ordre he Was a noble post  
 Fulle wel beloued and fulle famplier was he  
 With frankleyns ouer al in his contre  
 And eke with worthy yemen of the towne  
 For he hadde powez of confessioun  
 And seid him self more than a curate  
 And of his ordre he Was licenciat  
 Fulle suetely herd he confession  
 And plesaunt with his absolucion  
 And an easy man to gyue penaunce  
 There he wiste to haue gode pitaunce



## Prologue

For vnto a poure ordure for to gyue  
Is signe that a man is wele y shryue  
For if he yaf he durst wele make a baunt  
He wist that a man was repentaunt  
Many a man so hard is of herte  
He may nat wepe though he soze smerte  
Therfore in stede of wepyng and prayes  
Men moste geue siluer to the poure freres  
His tepat was y farsed ful of knyues  
And with pynnes to gyue faire wyues  
And certeyne he hadde a mery note  
Merely colde he synng and pley at the rote  
Of peddinges he bare vtterly the price  
His necke was white as the flour de lice  
Therto stronge he was as a champpoun  
And knewe the tauernes wele in euery towne  
And euery osteler and tapstere  
Better than a lazare or a beggestere  
For vnto suche a worthy man as he  
Accordeth nat as by his faculte  
To haue of suche seke lazars acqeyntaunce  
It is nat honest it may nat auarunce  
For to dele with suche poraille  
But with riche and sellers of bytaille  
And ouer alle there as richesse shulde aryse  
Curteys he was and lowly of seruite  
Ther was no man no where so vertuouse  
He was the best beggar in his house  
And yane a certeyne ferme for the graunt  
Noon of his Brethern cam in his haunt  
For though a widowe hadde nat a shoo  
So plesant was his in principio  
Yet wolde he haue a ferthing or he went



## Prologue

His purchase was better than his rent  
And berke he coude as it were a whelp  
In loue daies there coude he mchel helpe  
For there he nas lyke a cloystrez  
With a thredebare rope as a poure frere  
But he was lyke a maister or a pope  
Of double worstede was his semy cope  
That rounde was as a belle oute of presse  
Som what he lisped for his wantownesse  
To make his englysshe swete vpon his tonge  
And his harpyng when he hadde y sung  
His eyent wenkled in his hede a right  
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght  
This worthy frere was called huberd



Marchant ther was with a forked berd  
In motley on his horse high he sat  
Vpon his hede a flaundes beuer hat



## Prologue

His botes claspid feyre and fetously  
His reasons he spak ful solemnyly  
Shewing alwey the encesse of his wynyng  
He wolde the see were kepte for any thinge  
Betwyte Middelburgh and ore Welle  
Wele cowde he in his eschaunge selle  
This worthy man his witte ful wele besette  
Ther wist no wight that he was in dette  
So estatly he was of gouernaunce  
With his bartaynes and with his cheuesaunce  
Forsothe he was a worthy man with alle  
But sothe to say I not how men him calle



a Clerke ther was of Wyenforde also  
That vnto logik had longe y go  
And lene was his horse as a rake  
And he was nat right fat I vndertake  
But looked hellowe and thereto sobirly  
Ful thredebare was his ouerest courtly

Clerke of Wyenforde



For he hadde gotten him yet no benefice  
 He was nat wordly to haue an office  
 Nor he hadde leuy to haue at his beddis hede  
 He wenty booke clad in white and rede  
 Of ariþe and of his philosophie  
 He had robes riche or fedyl or sawtre  
 But alie be that he was a philosophre  
 Yet hadde he but lytel golde in cofre  
 But alie that he might of his frendes hent  
 On booke and on lernyng he it spent  
 And he sylly gan for the soules praye  
 Of theym that yaued him wherwith to scolaye  
 Of studie toke he moost cure and hede  
 Nat a worde spake he more than nede  
 And that was seyde in fourme and reuerence  
 Shorte and quike and ful of high sentence  
 Sowynng moral bertue was his speche  
 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche





## Prologue

**a** Sergeaunt of la we waaz and wise  
Was there that oft hadde be at the paruiſe  
That was also fulle riche of excellence  
Discrete he was and of grete reuerence  
He ſemyd ſuche his wordes were ſo wiſe  
Juſtice he was ful ofte in aſſiſe  
By patent and by playn cōmyſſioun  
For his ſcience and his high renoun  
Of fees and robes had he many one  
So grete a purchaſour was there nowhere none  
Al was fee ſymple to him in effecte  
His purchace myght nat be to him ſuſpecte  
Nowhere ſo beſy a man as he ther nas  
And yet he ſemed beſer than he was  
In termes had he caas and domes alle  
That fro the tyme of king William were falle  
Therto he coude endite and make a thing  
Ther coude no wight pynche at his writing  
And every ſtatute coude he pleyh by rote  
He rode but homely in a myddel cote  
y girthed With a ſeynt of ſilke with barres ſmale  
Of his aray telle I no lenger tale





## Prologue

Frankleyn was in his companye  
White was his herde as is the deysie  
And of his complexioun was sanguyn  
Wele loued he by the morowe a cuppe of wyne  
To lye in delite was euer his wone  
For he was eppurries owen sone  
That held opunyon that playn delite  
Was beray felicitye parfite  
An house holder and that a grete was he  
Seint Julian he was in his contrey  
His brede his ale was alwey after one  
A better viued man was no where none  
Withoute bake mete was he neuir in house  
His fishe his fleshe and that so plenteuous  
It snewed in his house of mete and drinke  
Of alle dainties that men coude thinke  
After the sondry season of the yere  
So chaunged he his mete and his souper  
Fulle many a fatte partriche hadde he in mewe  
And many a breme and luce in stewe  
Woo was his coke but his sawce were  
Popinaunt and sharp and redy alle his gere  
His table dormaunt in his halke alwey  
Was redy couered alle the long daye  
At sessions ther was he lord and sire  
Fulle oft tyme he was knyght of the shire  
A anlace and a gypseye al of silke  
Ryg at his girdel as white as morowe mylke  
A shereue hadde he be and coronoure  
Was nowhere suche a worthy hauesoure



## Prologue



¶ Haberdaßher ther was and a carpentere  
a        A webbe a dycer and a tapper  
      And they were clothed alle in one gyure  
Of a solempne and grete fraternyte  
Fulle fresshe and new theiȝ geyre pyked was  
Theiȝ knyves chaped were nat with brasse  
But al with siluer wrought fulle clene and wele  
Theiȝ girdeles and theiȝ pouches every dyle  
Wele semed eche of theȝ a faire burgees  
To sitten in the yelde halle at the dese  
Eueriche for the wisdom that he can  
Was happely for to be an alderman  
For catel hadde they ynow and rent  
And theiȝ wyues wolde it wele assent  
And elles certeyn they were to blame  
It is fulle faire to be called Madame  
And go to the bigyllles alle bifoze  
And haue a mantel rialy y boze



a      Toke they hadde with theym for the nones  
 To boyle the cheyns and the mary bones  
 And pou dre marchaunt tart and galingale  
 Wele knewe he a draught of london ale  
 He coude roost se the broyle and frye  
 Make mortrewes and wele bake a pye  
 But grete harme was it as it thought me  
 For on his shynne a mormale hadde he  
 And blanke manger made he with the beste



## Prologue



**S**hipman was there that woned far by west  
for ought I wote he was of dertmouth  
He rode upon a rownce as he couth  
In a golwe folding to the knee  
A dagger on a lace hanging hadde he  
A boute his necke bndre his arme a dowlne  
The hote somer hadde made his hewe alle browne  
And certeynly he was a gode felaue  
Fulle many a draught of wyne he hadde drawe  
fro burdeuy warde while the chapman slepe  
Of nyce conscience toke he no kepe  
If that he faught and hadde the higher honde  
By water he sent theym home to euerylonde  
But of his craft to reken wele his tydes  
His stremes and his daungers him besides  
His herberugh his mone and his lodemanage  
There was none suche from hulle to Cartage  
Hardy he was and waaz to bndertake  
With many a tempest his bezde hath been shake

## Prologue

He knew alle the hauenes that there were  
From Godelond unto Capfenestre  
And euery cryke in Britayn and in spayne  
His barge was called the Maudeleyne



With vs ther was a doctoure of phispye  
In the worlde was ther none him lyke  
To speke of physike and surgery  
For he was grounde in astronomye  
He kept his pacient a grete dele  
In houres by magyke naturelike  
Wele coude he of fortune the ascendent  
Of his ymages for his pacient  
He knewe the cause of euery maladye  
Were it of colde hete moyst or drye  
And were engendred of what humoure  
He was a verie parsite practesoure  
The cause y knowe and of his harme the rote  
Anone he gaf to the seke man his bote  
For redy alwey be his apotecaries



## Prologue

To send him drugges and his lectuaries  
For eche of theym made othez for to Wynne  
Theire frendeship was nat new to begynne  
Ful wele knewe he the olde Esculapius  
And discordez and eke Rufus  
Olde pocras. haly. and eke Galiene  
Serapion. Rasis. and eke Auicene  
Auerroys damascene and constantyn  
Bernarde Gatisden and Gilbertyn  
Of his dyete mesurable was he  
For it was of no superfluite  
But of grete norpsshing and degestyble  
His stode was but lytel on the byble  
In sangweyn and in perce ycladde with alle  
Pynded with taffata and with sand alle  
And lytelle he was of his dispence  
He kept that he wan in the pestilence  
For golde in physike is a cordialle  
Therfore he loued golde in especalle



## Prologue

a                   Gode wif thez was of besyde bathe  
And she was some dele deaf & that was scathe  
Of clothe making hadde she suche an haunt  
She passed theym of pyper and of gaunt  
In alie the parisshe wif was there none  
That to the offryngte bifore her shulde gone  
And if thez dyd certeyn brothe was she  
Than was she oute o falle charyte  
Her hercheues were fulle fyne of ggrounde  
I durst swere they weyd thre pounce  
That on sonday were on her hede  
Her hosen were of fyne scarlet rede  
Ful streyte y teyde and shoos ful moyst and new  
Bolde was her face faire and rede of hewe  
She was a worthy woman alle her lyue  
Husbondes at the chirche doze hadde she fyue  
Withoute othez company in youthe  
But therof nedith nat to speke as nowthe  
At acres hadde she been and at Jherusalem  
She had passed throughe many a straunge reame  
At Rome she hadde be and boloyne  
At seynt James in Galis and at Coloyne  
She coude moche of wandring in the wey  
Cap tothed was she sothly to sey  
Upon an ambuler ful easly she satte  
y wyped wele and on her hede an hatte  
As brode as it were a bokeler or a targe  
A fote mantel aboute her hippes large  
And on her heles a petre of spores sharpe  
Unfelauship coude she la we and carpe  
Of remedies of loue she coude par chaunce  
For of that arte she coude the olde daunce





Gode man thez was of religioun  
 a And was a poure parson of a towne  
 But riche he was of holy thought and werke  
 He was also a lerned man a clerke  
 That cristes gospelles truly wolde preche  
 His parisschons deuoutly wolde he teche  
 Benygne he was and wondre diligent  
 And in aduersite fulle pacient  
 And suche he was proued ofte sithes  
 Fulle lothe were he to curse for his tithes  
 But rather wolde he yeue oute of doute  
 Vnto his poure parisschons aboute  
 Of his offryngte and eke of his substaunce  
 He coude in lytel thinge haue suffisaunce  
 Wyde was his parysshe and houses fer a sonde  
 But he lete nat for rayne ne for thundre  
 In sekenesse nez in myscheyf to visite  
 The ferrest in his parysshe more and lyte  
 Vpon his feete and in his honde a staf

## Prologue

This noble ensample bnto his shepe he paue  
That first he wrought and afterwarde he taught  
Dute of the gospelle the wordes he caught  
And this figure he eked therto  
That if golde rust what shulde iron doo  
For a preest to be foule in whom we truste  
No wondre is a lewde man to ruste  
And shame it is if a preest take kepe  
A slotty shepeherd and a cle ne shepe  
Wele oughit a preest ensample to gyue  
By his ciencsse how his shepe shold ryue  
Besette nat his benefice to hyre  
And lete his shepe acombred in the myre  
And ryne to london to seynt poules  
And seke him a chauntrye for soules  
O thez with a broderhode to be withholde  
But duelle at home and kepe his folde  
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarpe  
He was a shepeherde and nat a mercenarpe  
And though he holy were and vertuouse  
He was nat to synfulmen to dispiteous  
Ne of his teching daungerous ne digne  
But in his speche discrete and benigne  
To drawe folke to he wyth fairnesse  
By gode ensample that was his besynesse  
But it were any parson obstynate  
Whether he were of high or lowe estate  
Him wolde he synbbe sharpe for the nones  
A better preest I trowe nowhere none is  
He wayted after no pompe ne reuerence  
Ne made to him a spyped conscience  
But cristes loze and his apostles twebue  
He taught but first he folowed him selue



## Prologne



W<sup>th</sup> him thez was a plewe man his Broder  
That hadde led of dung many a fother  
A trew swynker and a gode was he  
Leuyng in pease and parfite charite  
God loued he best with alle his hert  
At alle tymes though he gamed oz smert  
And than his nyghboure right as him selue  
He wolde thresshe and therto digge and delue  
For cristes sake for every poure wight  
Withoute hyre if it ley in his myght  
His tythes paide he faire and wele  
Of his proper swynke and his catele  
In a taberd he rode vpon a mere  
There was also a reue and eke a millere  
A sompnour and a pardonere also  
A manciple and my selue there was no moo



The mylier was a stoute carle for the nones  
 Fulle byt he was of braun and bones  
 That proued wele for ouer alle there he cam  
 At wrastling alwey he wolde haue the ram  
 He was short shuldred brode a thicke quarre  
 There was no dore that he nolde heue of the barre  
 Or breke it at rennyng with his hede  
 His berd as any sorwe or foy was rede  
 And therto brode as it were a spade  
 Upon the cop right of his nose he hadde  
 A werte. and there on stode a tufte of heres  
 Rede as the brusteles of a sowes eres  
 His nostrilles blake were and wide  
 A swerde and a bokelez bare he by his side  
 His mouth as grete was as a furney  
 He was a jangler and a goliardys  
 And that was moost of synne and harlotrys  
 Wele coude he stele corne and tolle thrys  
 And that he hadde a thombe of golde parde



## Prologu

A white cote and a blew hode wered he  
 A bagge pyppre coude he blowe and sowne  
 And therewith he brought vs oute of towne



a Gentyll manciple Was ther of the temple  
 Of whiche a catoure might take exemple  
 For to be wise in bying of vitaille  
 For whether he paid or toke by taille  
 Algate he waited so on his achate  
 That he was ay biforn and in gode state  
 Nowe is nat that of god a faire grace  
 That suche a lewed mannes witte shalke pace  
 The wisdom of an hepe of lernyd men  
 Of maisters hadde he mo thanne thris ten  
 That were of lawe experte and corious  
 Of whiche there were a dosen in that house  
 Worthy to be stewardes of rent and londe  
 Of any lord that is in Englonde  
 To make him lyue by his owen good  
 In honoure dettes but he were wode

## Prologue

Other lyue scarsely as theym liste desire  
And able for to helpe alle the shire  
In any cause that might falle or happe  
And yet this manciple set alie theiſ cappe



¶ There was a slendre colerike man  
His herde is shawe as nygh as he can  
His heres were by his eres rounde y shone  
His top was doched like a preest bifore  
Fullle leng were his legges and fullle lene  
By the staf there is no calf y sene  
Wele coude he kepe a garnez and a bynne  
There was none auditoure coude of him wyne  
Wele wist he by the drought and by the rayn  
The yelding of his sede and of his greyn  
His lordes shepe his nete and his depre  
His swyne his horse his store and his pultre  
Was hely in this reys gouernynge  
And by his couenaunt paue the rekenynge



# Prolog

Sith his lorde was twenty yere of age  
 Ther coude no man bringe him in a raffe  
 There nas baillie ne none other hyne  
 That he ne knewe his slighht of his cougne  
 They were of him a drad as of the deth  
 His wonyng was ful faire bpon a heth  
 With grene trees shadowed was his place  
 He coude better than his lorde purchase  
 Fulle riche he was astored pryueli  
 His lord wele coude he please subtilly  
 To yene and lene to him of his own good  
 And haue thanke and yete a cote and a hode  
 In youth he hadde lernyd a good mystere  
 He was a were gode wright a Carpenter  
 This reue sat bpon a wele gode stot  
 That was a pomegrey and hight scot  
 A long furcote of perce bpon him he hadde  
 And by his side he bare a rusty bladde  
 Of norfoke was this reue of which I telle  
 Beside a towne men calle Bladswelle  
 Tucked he was as is a frere aboute  
 And eni he rode the hyndrest of the route





## Prologue

a Somnoure with vs was in that place  
That hadde a fyre rede cherubyns face  
For saffleme he was with eyen narrow  
Note he was and likerous as a sparow  
With blak browes shalied and pilled berd  
Of his visage children were a ferd  
Ther nas quyk siluer litarge ne brymstone  
Vozace ceruse ne oyle of tartre none  
Ne oynement that wolde clense ne bite  
That him might helpe of his welkes white  
Ne of his knobbes sitting on his chekes  
Welkeloued he oynons garleke and lekes  
And for to drinke strong wyne as rede as blode  
Than wolde he speke and cry as he were wood  
And when he hadde wele dzonke the wyne  
Than wolde he speke no worde but latyn  
A fewe termes hadde he two or thre  
That he hadde lernyd of sum man of decre  
No wondre is he herde it alle the daye  
And eke ye knowe wele that a Jay  
Can clepe watte as wele as can the pope  
But who coude him in othir thinges trope  
Than hadde he spent alle his philopfy  
Ay questio quid queris wolde he cry  
He was a gentyl harlote and kynde  
A better felaw sholde men nat fynde  
He wolde suffre for a quarte of wyn  
A gode felowe to haue his concubyn  
A twelf moneth and excuse him at the fulle  
Fulle pryuely a synche eke coude he pulle  
And if he fonde owhere a good felawe  
He wolde teche him anone to haue a we  
In suche caas of the archdehyns curse



## Prologue

But if mannes soule were in his purse  
 For in his purse he sholde punysshed be  
 Purse is the archdekenes helle saide he  
 But wele I woote he lied right in dede  
 Of cursyng ough t eche man to drede  
 For cursyng wille sle right as soyling saueth  
 And also ware him of a significait  
 In daunger hadde he at his own guyse  
 Alle the yong tyrles of the diocysse  
 And knewe of theire counseyl and was of theire rede  
 A garlonde he hadde sette vpon his hede  
 As grete as it were an ale stake  
 A bokelez hadde he made him of a cake



w yth theym there rode a gentil pardone  
 Of rounyvale his frende and his compere  
 That streight was come fro the courte of Rome  
 Fulle lowde he song come hyther loue to me  
 This sompnoure bare to him a styf burdoun  
 Was neuiz trompe of half so grete a sowne

## Prologue

This pardoner had here as yelow as wey  
And smoth it heng as doth a stryke of fley  
By hounses heng his lockes that he hadde  
And therwith his shulders ouer spradde  
But than it ley by curpons one and oon  
An hode for joynte wered he none  
For it was trussed vpon his walette  
Him thought he rode vpon a new get  
Disshenylid saue his cappe he rode alle bare  
Suche garryng eyen had he as hath the an hare  
A bernacie hadde he sowed vpon his cappe  
His walet biforne him hadde he in his lappe  
Brette fulle of pardon come fro Rome alle hote  
A boyce he hadde as smalle as hath a gote  
No herde hadde he ne neuiz shuld haue  
As smothe was it as it were new shaye  
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare  
But of his craft from Berwyke vnto Ware  
He was ther nowhere suche a pardoner  
For in his male he hadde a pylowe beer  
Whiche that he seid was oure ladyes beyle  
He said he hadde a gobbet of the seple  
That seynt Petyr hadde whan that he went  
Vpon the see tyl Iesus crist him hent  
He hadde a crosse of laton fulle of stones  
And in a glasse he hadde pigges bones  
But with these reliques whan that he fonde  
A poure parson duelling vpon londe  
Vpon a daye he gat him more money  
Than the parson gat in monethes tway  
And thus hadde he flateries and iapes  
He made the parson and the peple his apes  
But truly to telle at the last



He was in chirche a noble eccle siaste  
 Wele cowde he rede a lesson or a stozpe  
 But alther best he songe an offretorpe  
 For wele he wist whan that songe was sunge  
 He must preche and fyle a while his tunge  
 To wynne siluer as he fulle wile coude  
 Therfore he songe the merierly and loude

n      Ow haue I tolde you shortely in a clause  
 The state the arraye the nombre & the cause  
 Why that assembled was this company

In Southwerke at the gentil hosterpe  
 That hight the Taberde fast by the belle  
 But now is tyme to you for to telle  
 How that we bare vs that ilke nyght  
 When that we were in the hostry a right  
 And after wille I telle of oure viage  
 And alle the remenaunt of oure pilgramage  
 But first I you pray of your curtesye  
 That ye arette nat my vilonye  
 Though that I playnly speke in this matere  
 To telle you thur wordes and their chere  
 And though I speke their wordes propriely  
 For this ye knowe as wele as I  
 Who shal a tale telle after a man  
 He must reherse as nere as he can  
 Euery worde if it be in his charge  
 Al speke he neuir so rudely and so large  
 Or elles he must telle his tale bntrewe  
 Or sey thinges or feyne wordes newe  
 He may nat spare althoug he were his broder  
 He moot as wele say o worde as a nother  
 Crist spake him selue ful brode in holy writte  
 And wele ye wote no vilany is it

## Prologue

Þe plato sepeþ who can it rede  
The worde must be cosyn to the dede  
Also I praye you foryeue it me  
Al though I set nat folk in theire degre  
Here in these tales as they shulde stonde  
My witte is shorte ye may wele vnderstonde



Þete were made oure ost to vs euerichone  
And to the soupere sette he vs anone  
He seruyd vs with vitaylle at the best  
Stronge was the wyne and wele drinke vs lest  
A semer man oure ost was with alle  
For to be a marshall in a lordes halke  
A large man he was with epen stepe  
A feyrez brugges is ther none in chepe  
Welde of his speche and wele was y taught  
And of manhode lacked he right naught  
Þe therto was he right a mery man  
And after souper to pley n he began  
And spake of mirth amonge othir thinges



Whan that we hadde made oure rehnynges  
 He sayd thus lordynnges truly  
 ye be to me right welcom hertly  
 For by my trewth if I shalle nat lye  
 I saw nat this yere so mery a company  
 At onys in this herborow as now  
 Feyne wolde I do you myrth if I wist how  
 And of a myrth I am right now be thought  
 To do you ease and it shal cost you nought  
 ye go to Taunterbury warde god you spede  
 The blissful martyr quyte you your mede  
 And wele ye wote as ye go by the wey  
 ye shapyn you to take and to reley  
 For truly comfort ne myrth is none  
 To ryde by the wey dombe as a stone  
 And therfore wille I make you disporte  
 As I said erst and do you comforte  
 And it lyketh you alle by one assent  
 For to stonde at my iugement  
 And for to wyke as I shalle you say  
 To morow whan ye ryden on the way  
 Now by my fadre soule that is dede  
 But ye be mery I shalle gyue you my hede  
 Holde by your hond withoute more speche  
 Dure counsel shal nat long be to seche  
 As thought it was nat worth to make vs wys  
 And graunted him with oute more a bys  
 And hadde him sey his berdite as him list  
 Lordynges quod he now herkne the best  
 But take it nat I praye you in disdeyn  
 This is the poynte to speke it shorte and pleyyn  
 That eche of you to shorte with your wey  
 In this biage shalle tel tales twey

## Prologue

To Caunterbury Warde I mene it so  
And homwarde he shal teile othez tales two  
Of auentures that whilom haue befallē  
And whiche of you berith him best of alle  
That is to say that tellith in this caas  
Tales of the best sentence and moost solace  
Shalie haue a souper of our alibez cost  
Here in this place sittynge by the post  
Whan that we com aȝen from Caunterbury  
And for to make you the more mery  
I wille my selue godely with you ryde  
Right at myn owen cost and be your gyde  
And who that wol my iugement with say  
Shortely shal paye alle that is spent by the wey  
And if he bouchsauf that it be so  
Tel me anone withente wordes mo  
And I wille arly shape me therfore  
This thing was graunted and othes swore  
With ful glad herte and preyen him also  
That he wolde bouchesauf that it be so  
And that he wolde be our gouernour  
And of our tales iuge and reportour  
And sette a souper at a certeyn prync  
And wolde be ruled at his deuyce  
High and lowe and alle by one assent  
We be accorded to this iugement  
And ther bpon the wyne was sette anone  
We dranke and to rest went we echone  
With oute any lenger taryng  
A morowe when the day gan spring  
Up rose our hoost and was alle our cok  
And gadred us to gidre alle in a flock  
And forth we ryden litel more than paas



## Prologue

Unto the Watering of sent Thomas  
And there our host gan his horse a rest  
And said hekeneth lordinges if ye list  
ye woot oure forwarde and I you recorde  
yfeupn song and morosonge accorde  
Let se now who shal telle the first tale  
As euir mot I drinke wyne or ale  
Who so wil be rebelle to my iugement  
Shal pay for alle that is by the wey spent

¶ We draw cut or that ye further twynne  
n     Whiche shal the first tale begynne

¶ Syr knyght quod he my master and my lord  
Now draw with cut for that is myn accorde  
Cometh hether quod he my lady prioress  
And ye Syr clerke let by your shamefastnes  
Ne studie nat. ley on hand euery man  
Anone to drawen euery wight began  
And shortly to telle as it was  
Were it by auenture fortune or caas  
The sothe is this. the cut fyl on the knyght  
¶ Of whiche fulle blith and glade is euery wight  
And telle he must as it was reson  
By forwarde and by composition  
As ye haue herde what nedith wordes mo  
And whan this godeman sawe that it was so  
As he that was wise and obedient  
To kepe his forwarde by his fre assent  
He saide sithnes I shal begynne the game  
What welcom be cut in goddes name  
Now let vs ryde and herken what I say  
And with that worde we riden furth our wey  
And he began with a right mery chere  
And seydanone his tale as ye shalle here

# The knyghtes Tale

Here begynneth the knyghtes tale



**W**hilom as olde stozpes tellith vs  
Ther was a duke hight Theseus  
Of Thebes he was lorde and gouernour  
And in his tyme suche a conquerour  
That greter was ther none vndre the sonne  
fulle many a riche contre hadde he wonne  
That with his wisdom and cheualry  
He conquered alle the regne of femyne  
That whilom was cleped Cithea  
And wedded the quene ypolita  
And brought her home in his contre  
With moche glorie and solennyte  
And eke her yong suster Emely  
And thus with victory and melody  
Let this worthy duke to athenes ryde  
And alle his hoost in harneys him beside  
And certes if it nere to long to here



## The knyghtes Tale

I wolde haue tolde fully the matere  
How wonne was the regne of sempne  
By thesens and by his cheualry  
And of the grete bataille for the nones  
Betwix Atheues and amafones  
And how beseged was ypolita  
The faire hardy quene of Cithea  
And of the fest that was at her wedding  
And of the tempest at her home comping  
But alle that thyng I moot as now forbere  
I haue god wote a large felde to ere  
And weke been the oxen in my plow  
The remenaunt of my tale is long ynow  
I wil nat let eke none of this route  
Yet euery felow telle his tale aboute  
And let se now who shalle the souper wyne  
And there I left I wille agayn begynne

His duke of whom I make mencion  
t When he was come almost to the town  
In al his welthe and his moost pryde  
He was ware as he cast his eye a syde  
Where that there knelt in the high wey  
A company of ladies twey and twey  
Eche after othe cladde in clothes blake  
But suche a crye and suche a wo they make  
That in this world nys creature lpyng  
That herde suche an othe weymenting  
And of this cry they nolde neuir stentyn  
Tyl they the reynes of his bridel hentyn  
What folke be ye that at myn home comyng  
Perturben so my fest with cryng  
Quod Theseus. haue ye so grete enuye  
Of myn honour that thus compleyn and crye

## The knyghtes tale

Oz who hath you mysboden oz offended  
And tel me if it may be amended  
And why that ye be clothed thus in blake  
The oldest lady of them alle spake  
Whan she had swoned with a dedly chere  
That it was rewith to se and to here  
She sayd lorde to whom fortune hath yeu  
Victory. and as a conquerour to lye  
Nought greueth vs your glory and your honour  
But we beseeke you of mercy and socour  
Haue mercy on our woo and distresse  
Som droppe of pite through thy gentillesse  
Upon vs wretched women let now falle  
For certes lorde ther is none of vs alle  
That she ne hath been duchesse oz a quene  
Now be we captiffes as it is wile sene  
Thanked be fortune and her fals whele  
That none estate ensureth to be wile  
Now certes lorde to abide your presence  
Here in this temple of the goddesse clemence  
We haue be wayting alle this tourning tyme  
Now help vs lord such it lieth in thy myght  
Wreche which that wepe and wayle thus  
i Whilom wis to king Campanus  
That starft at thebes a cursed be that day  
And alle we than beren in this araye  
And make alle this lamentacion  
We losten alle our husbandes at that toun  
Whiles that the sege there aboute lay  
And yet now the elde cron wela way  
That lord is now of Thebes that cite  
Fulfilled of Ire and iniquite  
He for te spite and for his tiranny



## The knyghtes tafe

To doon the ded Bodies bilony  
Of alle our lordes which that been slawe  
Hath alle the bodies on an hepe y drawe  
And wol nat suffre theym by none assent  
Nether to be buryed ne to be brent  
But makith houndes to ete them in dispite  
And with that worde with oute more respite  
They fallen groueling and cry piteously  
Haue on vs wrechid women som mercy  
And let our sorow synke in thyn herte  
This gentil duke of his counseil stert  
With hert pitous whenne he herde them speke  
Him thought his hert wolde breke  
When he sawe them so pitous and so mate  
That whilom were of so grete estate  
And in his armes he them alle byhent  
And them conforteth in fulle gode entent  
And swore his othe as he was trew knyght  
He wolde do so ferforth his might  
Upon the tyraunt creon him to wreke  
That alle the peple of grece shuld speke  
How Creon was of thesenaus served  
As he that hath his deth wele deserued  
And right anone withouten more abode  
His baner he displaied and forth he rode  
To thebes warde and alle his oost besyde  
No neer athenes nolde he go ne ryde  
Ne take his ease nat fully half a day  
But on his wey that nyght he lay  
And sent anone ppolita the quene  
And Emely her yong suster shene  
Unto the toun of athenes to dwellle  
And forth he rydeth ther is no more to telle

## The knyghtes tale

He rede statue of mars With spere and targe  
t So shyneth in his white baner large  
That alie the felde glittren vp and down  
And by his baner born is his penon  
Of golde fulle riche in which ther was y bete  
The mynutaure which he wan in crete  
Thus rideth this duke this conquerour  
And in his oste of cheualrye the floure  
Til that he cam to Thebes and a light  
faire in a feld there as he thought to fight  
But shortly for to speke of this thing  
With creon which was of thebes kynng  
He faught . and slaw him manly as a knyght  
In playn bataille and put his folke to flight  
And at a sawte he wan the cite after  
And rent a down walle sparre and rafter  
And to the ladies he restored ageyn  
The bodies of thei husbondes that wer slayn  
To do obseques as tho was the gypse  
But it were atte longe for to deuise  
The grete clamour and the weymentyng  
That the ladies made atte brennyng  
Of the bodies . and the grete honour  
That Theseus the noble conquerour  
Doth to the ladies when they from him went  
But shortly for to telle is myn entent  
When that this worthy duke this Theseus  
Hath creon slayne and wan thebes thus  
Styl in the felde he toke al nyght his rest  
And did with alle the contre as him list  
He ransaked in the taas of bodies dede  
Theym for to stripe of harneys and of wede  
The pylours dyde thei besynesse and cure



## The knyghtes tale

After the bataylle and the discomfiture  
And so besyle that in that caas they sonde  
Throw gyrt With many a greuous wounde  
Two yong knyghtes lyng by and by  
Bothe in one harneys wrought fulle richely  
Of whiche two Arcite hight that one  
And the other knyght heght Palamon  
Nat fully quicke ne fully dede they were  
But by thei cote armure and thei gere  
The herodes knew theym best in specialle  
As that they were of the blode ryalle  
Of thebes and of Sustryn two y bore  
Dute of the taas the pylours haue theym toze  
And haue theym caried soft into the tent  
Of the seus . and he fulie sone theym sent  
To Athenes to duelle there in prysen  
Perpetuelle for he nolde no raunson  
And when this worthy duke hadde thus doon  
He toke his hoost and home he gothe anone  
With laurez crowned as a conqueroure  
And there he lyueth in Joye and in honoure  
Terme of his lyf what nedith wordes moo  
And in a toure in anguysshe and with woo  
Duellith palamon and his felaw arcite  
For euermore thez may no golde theym quyte  
    Bus passed yere by yere and day by day  
t   Tyl it fel ones in a moornyng of May  
    That Emely that fairez was to seen  
Than is the self vpon the stalke grene  
And fressher than may with floures newe  
For with the rose coloure strone hez he w  
I not which was the fairez of theym two  
Er it was day as was hez wonte to do

She was a ryse and alle redy dight  
 For may wol haue no slottarde a nyght  
 The season prickith euey gentil hert  
 And makith him oute of his slepe to stert  
 And sayeth aryse and do thyn obseruaunces  
 This makith Emely to haue remembraunces  
 To do honour to may and for to ryse  
 y clothed fresshe was she to deuyse  
 Bez yelow here was broyded on a tresse  
 Behinde her bahe along yerd I gesse  
 And in the gardeyn at the son byriste  
 She walked by and down and as her liste  
 She gadred floures part white and rede  
 To make a subtel chapelet for her hede  
 And as an aungel heuynly she song  
 The grete toure that was so thicke and stronge  
 Whiche of the caster was the chief dungeon  
 There as the knyghtes were in pryson  
 Of whiche I tolde you and telle shalke  
 Was euyn ioynaunt to the gardyn walke  
 There as this Emely hadde her pleynng  
 Bright was the sonne and cleze that mornynng  
 And palamon this wofulle prysonez  
 As was his wone by leue of his gayler  
 Was ryse and rowmeth in the chambre on high  
 In whiche alle the noble cyte he seith  
 And eke the gardyn ful of braunches grene  
 There as this fresshe Emely the shene  
 Was in her walk and romed by and downe  
 This soroufulle prysonez this palamon  
 Both in the chambre rowmpng to and fro  
 And to him selue compleyned of his woo  
 That he was borne fulle ofte he seyde alas



## The huygotes tale

And so besylt by aventure and caas  
That through a Wyndow of many a barre  
Of iron grete and square as any sparre  
He cast his eyen vpon Emelya  
And therwith he blent and cryed aa  
As though he were stongen to the hert  
And with that cry arcite anone by stere  
And saide to syn myne what alyth the  
That art so pale and dedly on to see  
Why criest thou who hath do the offence  
For goddes loue take alle in pacience  
Dure pryson. for it may non other be  
Fortune hath yene vs this aduersite  
Or elles som wiked aspecte or disposicion  
Of saturne. by som constellation  
Hath yene vs this al though we had sworn  
So stode the heuyn whan we were born  
We must endure this is the shorte and pleyn  
This palamon aunswerd and seid a geyn  
Cosyn forsoth of this opunyon  
Thou hast a deyn ymaginacion  
This pryson causeth me nat to crye  
But I was hurt now through myn eye  
Vnto my hert that wol my bane be  
The fairnesse of a lady that I se  
Yondre in the gardeyn rowmynge to and fro  
Is cause of my crynge and my woo  
I not whether she be woman or goddesse  
But vennis it is forþley as I gesse  
And therwith alle on knees down he fylle  
And said venus if it be thy wille  
You in this gardeyn thus to transfigure  
Bifore me sorowfulle wreche thy creature

Dute of this pryson heipe that we may shape  
 And if it be oure destynye so be shape  
 By eterne worde to dye in pryson  
 Of oure lignage haue som compassion  
 That is sorowe y brought by tyrannye  
 And with that worde Arcyte can espye  
 Where as the lady went to and froo  
 And with that sight her beaute hurte him so  
 That if palamon were wounded soze  
 Arcyte is hurt a smoch more  
 And with a sygn he sayde piteously  
 The fresche beaute me sleeth sodenly  
 Of her that rowmeth in yondre place  
 And but I haue her mercy and her grace  
 That I may see her at the leste wey  
 I nam but dede there is no more to seye  
 His palamon when he these wordes herde  
 t Dispiteously he loveth and aunswerd  
 Whether saist thou this in earnest or in pleye  
 Nay quod arcyte in earnest by my say  
 God helpe me so I lust ful litel to pleye  
 This palamon gan knytte his browes tway  
 It were quod he to the no grete honoure  
 For to be fals ne for to be a traytoure  
 To me that am thy cosyn and thy brother  
 y sworne fuldepe and eche of vs to othe  
 That neuiz for to dyen in the peyn  
 Tyl that the deth departe shalle vs twayn  
 Neyther of vs in loue to hyndre othe  
 Ne in non othe case my leue brother  
 And that thou shuldest furthez me  
 In euery case as I shulde furthez the  
 This was thy othe and myne certeyn



## The knyghtes Tale

I wote it wele thou darst it nat withsaien  
Thus art thou of my counseil withoute doute  
And now thou woldest falsely be aboute  
To loue my lady whom I loue and serue  
And euiz shalle tisse that myn herte sterue  
Now certes fals arcite thou shalt nat so  
I loued her first and tolde the my wo  
As to my counsel and to my brother sworn  
To further me as I haue tolde biforn  
For which thou art bounden as a knyght  
To helpe me if it lay in thy myght  
Or elles art thou fals I dar wele seyn  
This Arcite fulle proudly spake ageyn  
Thou shalt quod he be rather fals than I  
But thou art fals I telle the vtterly  
For paramour I loued her first er thou  
What wilt thou seyn thou wifest nat yet now  
Whether she be a woman or a goddesse  
Thyn is affection of holynesse  
And myn is loue as to a creature  
For which I tolde the myn auenture  
As to my cosyn and my brother sworn  
I suppose thou louedest her biforn  
Wotest thou nat wele the olde clerkes sawe  
That who shal gyue a louez any law  
Loue is a greter lawe by my panne  
Than may be geue of any erthly man  
And therfore positif law and suche decre  
Is broken alday for loue in eche degre  
A man must nedes loue matre his hede  
He may nat fle it though he shuld be dede  
Albe she mayde widow or wif  
And eke it is nat likely al thy lyf

## The knyghtes Tale

To stonde in her grace no more shalle I  
For wele thou wotest thy self berey  
That thou and I be dampued to pryson  
Perpetually vs ganeth no raunson  
We stryue as did the houndes for the bone  
They faught alday and yet theiſ part was none  
Theſ cam a curze while they were ſo wroth  
And baaz a wey the bone bit wix them both  
And therfore at the kinges court my brother  
Eche man for him ſelue there is none other  
Loue if thou liſt for I loue and ay ſhalle  
And ſothly liſt brodre this is alle  
Here in this pryſon muſt we endure  
And euery of vs take his auenture  
Grete was the ſtryf and long betwix them twey  
yf that I hadde leyſer for to ſey  
But to the effecte it happed on a day  
To telle it you ſhortly as I may  
Worthy duke that hight parotheus  
a That ſela w was to duke theſeus  
Sith thilke day that they were children lite  
Was come to athenes his ſela w to viſite  
And for to pley as he was wonte to doo  
For in this worlde he loued noman ſo o  
And he loued him as tenderly ageyn  
So wele they loued as olde bokes ſayn  
That when that one was dede ſothly to telle  
His ſela w went and ſought him down in helle  
But of that ſtory liſt me nat to endite  
Duke parotheus loued wele arcite  
And hadde him know at thebes pere by pere  
And finally at the request and prayer  
Of parotheus withoute any raunſon



Duke Theseus lete him oute of pryson  
 frely to go where him list ouer alle  
 In suche a gypse as I you telle shalfe  
 This was the forwarde playnly to cōdite.  
 Betwyte duke Theseus and him arcite  
 That if so were that Arcite were founde  
 Euir in his lif by day or by stounde  
 In any countre of this duke Theseus  
 And he were caught. it was accorded thus  
 That with a swerde he shulde lese his hede  
 There was none othez remedy ne rede  
 But takith his leue and homwarde him sprdde  
 Let him be waar his neche lieth to wēde  
 How grete sorow now suffreth arcite  
 His deth he feleth through his herte smyte  
 He wepith wayleth and crieth pytiously  
 To sle him selue he wayteth pryuely  
 He said alas the day that I was bozn  
 Now is my pryson werse than biforn  
 Now is me shapen eternally to dwell  
 Nat in purgatory but in helle  
 Alas that euir knew I Parotheus  
 For elles hadde I duelt with Theseus  
 y fetred in his pryson euir moo  
 Than hadde I be in ease and nat in woo  
 Only the sight of her whom that I serue  
 Though that I neuir her grace may deserue  
 Worde haue suffised right ynow for me  
 O dere cosyn Palamon quod he  
 Thyng is the victory of this anenture  
 Ful blisful in pryson maist thou endure  
 In pryson nay. certes but in paradise  
 Wele hath fortune to the turned the dysse

## The knyghtes Tale

That haste the sight of her and I thabſence  
For poſſible it is ſithnes thou haſt her preſence  
And art a knyght a worthy man and able  
That by ſom caas ſith fortune is chaungeable  
Thou mayſt ſomtyme to thy deſyre atteyne  
But I that am exiled and barzeryn  
Of alie grace and ſo in grete diſpeyr  
That there nys water erth fyre ne eyre  
Ne creature that of them maketh is  
That may ne hele or do comfort in this  
Wele ought I ſterue in wanhope and diſtreſſe  
Fare wele my lif my luſt and my gladneſſe  
Alas why playnen men ſo in comune  
On purueaunce of god or of fortune  
That yeueth them ofte in many wiſe  
Wele better than them ſelf can deuſe  
Som men deſire to haue richeſſe  
That cauſe is of grete ſekeneſſe  
And ſom man wolde oute of his pryſon fayne  
That in his houſe of his meyne is ſlayn  
Infinite harmes be in this matere  
We woot nat what thing we pray here  
We faren as he that dronke is as a mouſe  
A dronken man wote wele he hath an houſe  
But he woot nat which is the right wey thider  
And to a dronken man the wey is ſlider  
And certes in this worlde ſo fare we  
We ſeken faſt after felicitye  
But we go wrong ful ofte truly  
Thus may we ſey alle. and namely I  
That wende haue hadde a grete opunyon  
That and I myght ſcape oute of pryſon  
Than hadde I be in ioye and parſite hele



There now I am exiled from myn wele  
 Sithnes I may nat se you Emely  
 I ne am but dede ther is no remedy  
 Upon that othez syde Palamon  
 Whan that he wist Arcite was gone  
 Suche sorow he maketh that the grete toure  
 Resounded of his pelling and clamour  
 The pure fetters on his shynnes grete  
 Were of his byttre salt teres wete  
 Allas quod he Arcite cosyn myne  
 Of alle oure stryf god woot the frute is thyne  
 Thou walkest now in thebes at thy large  
 And of my wo thou yeuest litelle charge  
 Thou mayst say thou hast wisdom and manhode  
 Assemble alle the folke of oure kynrede  
 And make warre so sharpe in this countre  
 That by som auenture or by som tretie  
 Thou mast haue her to lady and to wif  
 For whom I must uedes lese my lyf  
 For as by wey of possibilite  
 Sithnes thou art at large of pryson free  
 And art a lorde grete in this anauntage  
 More than is myn that sterue here in a cage  
 For I may wepe and wail whiles I lyue  
 With alle the woo that pryson may me yeue  
 And eke withe peyne that loue me yeueth also  
 That doubliith alle my tourment and my woo  
 Therwith the fyre of jelousye bystert  
 Within his breest and hent him by the herte  
 So wodely that he likly was to beholde  
 The boy tre or asshen dede or colde  
 That sayde o cruel goddesse that gouerne  
 The worlde with byuding of your worde etern

## The knyghtes Tale

And Writen in the table of the athamant  
your parlement and your etern grant  
What is mankynde more vnto you hold  
Than is the shepe that rouketh in the fold  
For skapn is man right as an other best  
And duellith eke in pryson and in arrest  
And hath seknesse and grete aduersite  
And ofte tyme gyltes parde  
What gouernail is in this prescience  
That gyltes turmentith Innocence  
And yet encresith this alle my penaunce  
That man is bounde to his obseruaunce  
For goddes sake to lettyn of his Wille  
There as a beest may alle his lust fulfyllen  
And whan a beest is dede he hath no pyn  
And after his deth man may wepe and pleyne  
Though in this worlde he haue care and woo  
Withoute doute it may stonde so  
The aunswere of this let I to deuynes  
But wile I woot in this world gret pyne is  
Allas I se a serpent or a theif  
That many a true man hath do myschief  
Gone at his charge and where him list may turne  
Vnt I must be in pryson through saturne  
And through him vnhappy and eke wood  
That hath destroyed wele nygh alle the blode  
Of thebes. With his wast walles wide  
And venus sleeth me in that other side  
For Ielousye and fere of him arcite  
Now wol I stint of palamon alyte  
And let him in his prison stilke duelle  
And of Arcite forth I worde you telle  
The some passed the nyghtes waxen lough



Encrefith he double wise the peynes strong  
 Bothe of the louez and of the prysonez  
 I ne woot who hath the wofulkez myster  
 For shortly to say this palamon  
 Perpetuallly is dampned to pryson  
 In cheynes and in feters to be dede  
 And Arcite is exiled on his hide  
 For euir more as oute of that countre  
 For neuir more shal he his lady see  
 you louers as he I now this question  
 who hath the worse of Arcite or Palamon  
 That one may se his lady day by day  
 But in pryson must he duelle alwey  
 That othez where himlyst may ryde or go  
 But se his lady shalle he neuir mo  
 Now demeth as ye list ye that can  
 For I wille telle forth as I began  
 When that Arcite to the bes come was  
 Ful ofte alday he swelt and sayd alas  
 For se his lady shal he neuir moo  
 And shortely to conclude alle his woo  
 So moche sorow ne hath creature  
 That is or shalbe while the worlde may dure  
 His slepe his mete his drinke is him beraft  
 That lene he way and drye as is a shaft  
 His eyen holow and grisle to beholde  
 His hew fela w and pale as ashen colde  
 And solitary he was and euir allone  
 And wayling al the nyght making his mone  
 And if he herd song or instrument  
 Than wolde he wepe he myght nat stent  
 So feble were his spirites and so low  
 And chaunged so that no man coude know

## The knyghtes Tale

His speche ne his boye thought men it herde  
As in his gyre for alre the worlde it ferde  
Noght only lyke thre louers malady  
Of hereos but rather like to many  
Engendred of humou2 malancolike  
Beforn in his celle fantastike  
And shortly turned bp so down  
Both habite and disposicioun  
Of him this woful louez dan Arcite  
What sholde I of his wo alday endite  
Whan he endured hadde a yere or two  
This cruel turment this peyne and woo  
At Thebes in his countre as I sayde  
Upon a nyght in slepe as he him layde  
Him thought how that wynged Mercury  
Biforn him stode and badde him be mery  
His slepp yerd he baaz in honde bp right  
An hat he wered bpon his heres bright  
Arzaped was this god as he toke hys pe  
As he was whan argus toke his shepe  
And sayd him thus to Athenes thou shalt wende  
There is the shape of thy woo an ende  
And with that worde Arcite awoke and stert  
Now truely how soze that me smert  
Quod he to Athenes wil I fare  
Ne for no drede of deth shal I spare  
To se my lady that I loue and serue  
In her presence reche I nat to sterue  
And with that worde he caught a myrou2  
And saw that chaunged was his colou2  
And saw his bisage in a nother kynde  
And right anone it ran him in his mynde  
That sithen his face was so disfigured



## The knyghtes Tale

Of malady the whiche he hadde endured  
He myght wele if that he bare him low  
Pyue in athenes euir more vnknow  
And se his lady wele nygh day be day  
And right anone he chaunged his aray  
And cladde him in a poure labourez  
And alone saue only a poure squere  
That knew his pruyte and alle his caas  
Whiche was disguysed pourly as he was  
To athenes is he gone the next way  
And to the courte he went vpon a day  
And at the gate he profered his seruice  
To drugg and to draue & what men wolde deuyse  
And shortly of this matere for to seyn  
He fil in office towarde a chamberleyn  
The whiche that was duclyng with Emely  
For he was wise and wele coude a spy  
Of euery seruaunt whiche that serued there  
Wele coude he he wode and water here  
For he was pong and myghty for the nones  
And therto he was strong and big of bones  
To do that ony wight him coude deuyse  
A yere or two he was in this seruice  
Page in the chambre of Emely the brighthe  
And philostrate he seyde that he hight  
But half so wele a loued man as he  
Ne was there none in courte of his degre  
He was so gentyl of condicion  
That through alle the courte of his rencun  
They sayde that it were grete charyte  
That Theseus wolde enhaunse his degre  
And put him in a worshipful seruice  
There that he myght his vertue exercyse

And thus Within a while his name sprong  
 Both of his dedes and of his gode tong  
 That Theseus hath take him so nere  
 That of his chambre he made him a squire  
 And gaue him golde to mayntene his degre  
 And eke men brought him oute of his countre  
 fro yere to yere ful priuely his rent  
 But honestly and slightly he it spent  
 That no man wondred how that he it hadde  
 And thre yere in this wise his lif he ladde  
 And bare him in pease and eke in werre  
 There was noman that Theseus hadde derre  
 And in this blisse lete I now arcite  
 a And speke I wil of Palamon a lite  
 In derkenesse horrible and strong pryson  
 This seyn yere hath sete this Palamon  
 For ynned what for woo and distresse  
 Who feith double woo and heynesse  
 But Palamon that loue distreyneth soo  
 And wode oute of his witte he goth for woo  
 And eke therto he is a prysoner  
 Parpetualle and nat only for a yere  
 Who coude ryme in englyshe propirly  
 His martirdome forsoth it am nat I  
 Therfore I passe as lightly as I may  
 It fyl in that seynth yere in may  
 The thridde nyght as olde bokes sayn  
 That alle this story tellen more playn  
 Were it by auenture or destyne  
 As that whan a thing is shapen it shalbe  
 That sone after the midnyght Palamon  
 By helpe of a frende broke hath his pryson  
 And fleeth the cyte as sone as he may go



## The knyghtes Tale

For he hadde yene his gayler drinke so  
Of a clarey made of a certayne wyne  
With nercotises and oppe of thebes fyne  
That alle nyght though men wolde him shake  
The gayler so slepte he myght nat awake  
And thus he fleeth as fast as he may  
The nyght was shorte and fast by the day  
That nedes cost he must him selue hyde  
And to a groue fast there beside  
With dredeful fote than stalkith palamon  
For shortly this was his opunyon  
That in that groue he wolde him hide al day  
And in the nyght than wolde he take his wey  
To thebes warde his frendes for to prey  
On Theseus to helpe him to werrey  
And shortly eyther he wolde lese his lyf  
Or wyne faire Emely to his wif  
This is the effecte and the entent playne  
Now wol I turne to Arcite atteyn  
That tytel wist how nyght was his care  
Tyl that fortune hadde brought him in the snare  
The mery lark messenger of day  
Salueth in her song the morow gray  
And firy phebus riseth by so bright  
That alle the orient laughith of that sight  
And with the stremes drieth the greues  
The siluer droppes hanging on the leues  
And Arcite that in the courte ryalle  
With theseus his squyer principalle  
Is ryse and loketh on the mery day  
And for to do his obseruaunce to may  
Remembring on the poynte of his desire  
He on his cousez startling as the fyre

## The knyghtes tale

Is ryden to the felde hym to pley  
Dute of the courte were it a myle or twey  
And to the groue of whiche that I you tolde  
By auenture his wey he can to horde  
To make him a garlond of the greues  
Were it of wodebinde or of hauthornleues  
And loude he song ayenst the sonne shene  
May with alle thy floures and thy grene  
Welcom be thou fresshe faire may  
In hope that I som grene get may  
And fro his courser with a lusty herte  
Into the groue ful hastily he sterte  
And in a pathe he rowmed by and down  
There as by auenture this Palamon  
Was in a busshe that noman might him se  
For soze a ferde of his deth was he  
No thing knew he that this was Arcite  
God wote he wolde haue trowed it fulle lye  
But soth is sayd go sithen many peres  
That feld hath eyen and wode hath eres  
It is fulle faire a man to bere him cun  
For alday men mete at byset steupn  
For litel went Arcite of his felawe  
That was so nygh to herkyn alle his saw  
Whan that Arcite hadde rowmed al his felle  
Palamon in the busshe now sitteth stille  
And Arcite song alle the roundel lustily  
Into a studie he fel sodenly  
As doon these louers in thei2 quente geres  
Now in the crop and now in the bre res  
Now by now down as bohet in a well  
Right as the fryday sothly for to telle  
Now it shyneth now it reyneth fast



## The knyghtes Tale

Right so can guerry Venus ouer cast  
The hertes of her folke right as her day  
Is gueriful. right so chaunged she aray  
Selden is the fryday alle the woke like  
Whan that arcite hadde songe he gan to sike  
And he set him down withoute any more  
Alas quod he the day that I was bore  
How long Iuno through thy cruelte  
Wilt thou werien thebes the cyte  
Alas y brought is to confusion  
The brode ryalles of Cadme and Amphion  
Of Cadmus whiche was the first man  
That Thebes bilte or first the toun bigan  
And of the cyte first was crowned king  
Of his lynage am I and of his offspring  
By veray lyne as of the stoke ryalles  
And now I am so kaptif and so thralle  
That he that is my mortalle enemy  
I serue him and am his squier pouverly  
And yet doth me Iuno wele more shame  
For I dare nat be knowe myn owen name  
But there as I woute was to hight Arcite  
Now hight I philostrate nat worth a myte  
Alas thou fel mars alias thou Iuno  
Thus your ire hath our lynage alforde  
Saue only me and wrechid palamon  
That Theseus martreth in pryson  
And ouer alle thus to sle me vterly  
Loue hath his spyte darte so brennyngly  
It strypheth through my true careful herte  
That shapen was erst my deth than my sherte  
ye sle me with your euen Emely  
ye be the cause wherfore that I dye

## The knyghtes tale

Of alle the remenaunt of myn other care  
Ne sette I nat the mountance of a tare  
So that I coude do aught to your plesaunce  
And with that worde he fyl down in a traunce  
A longe tyme and afterwarde he by stert  
This Palamon that thought through his herte  
He felt a colde swerde sodenly glyde  
For ire he quoke he nolde no lengre abide  
And whan that he hath herd Arcites tale  
As he were wode with face dede and pale  
He stert him by oute of the busshes thicke  
And seide Arcite false traytour wiche  
Now art thou hent that louest my lady soo  
For whom that I haue this peyne and woo  
And art my blode and to my counceyl sworn  
And I ful ofte haue tolde the here biforn  
And hast be iaped here duke Theseus  
And falsely hast chaunged thy name thus  
I wil be dede or elles thou shalt dye  
Thou shalt nat loue my lady Emely  
But I wille loue her only and no moo  
For I am Palamon thy mortal soo  
And though I haue no wepyng in this place  
But oute of pryson am stert by grace  
I drede nat outhere thou shalt dye  
Or thou ne shalt nat louen Emely  
These whiche thou wilt. thou shalt nat avertere  
This Arcite with full despitous herte  
Whan he him knew and hadde his tale herde  
As ferse as lyon pulled oute his swerde  
And sayde thus by god that sytte a boue  
Ner it that thou art seke and wode for loue  
And ke that thou no wepyng hast in this place



## The knyghtes Tale

Thou sholdest neuiz oute of this groue pace  
That thou ue shuldest dye of myn hond  
For I desye thy surete and thy bond  
Which that thou sayst I haue made to the  
What berz fole thinke that loue is fre  
And I wol loue her magre al thy might  
But for as moche as thou art a knyght  
And wilnest to darrayne here by bataille  
Haue here my trowth to morow I wille nat fayle  
Withoute witting of any othez wight  
That here I wol be founden as a knyght  
And bringen harneys right ynow for the  
And chese the best and leue the worst to me  
And mete and drinke this nyght wil I bring  
ynow for the and clothes for thy bedding  
And if so be that thou my lady wyne  
And sle me in this wode that I am in  
Thou maist wele haue thy lady as for me  
This palamon aunswerd I grant it the  
And thus they be departed til amow  
When either of them hath leid his feith to borow  
Occupied oute of alle charite  
Dregne that woldest haue no felaw with the  
ful soth is said that loue ne lordship  
Wil nat his thankes haue ony felawship  
We finde this of arcite and palamon  
Arcite is ryden anone into the toun  
And on the morowe anone oz it were light  
ful pryuelly two harneys hath he dight  
Both sufficient and mete and to darzeyen  
The bataylle in the felde bitwix them twayne  
And on his horse allone as he was born  
He caried the harneys him biforn

And in the groue at tyme and place set  
 This arcite and this palamon bee n mette  
 Tho chaunge gan the colour in her face  
 Right as the hunters in regne of trace  
 That stondesth at the gappe With a spere  
 Whan hunted is the loun and the bere  
 And herith hym come ruffhing in the greues  
 And brekith both bowes and eke leuys  
 And thinketh here cometh my mortal ennemy  
 With oute faile he must be dede or I  
 For ether I nust sle him atte gappe  
 Or he must sle me if I mys happe  
 So ferden they in chaunging of thei2 be w  
 As fer as ony of them other knew  
 Ther nas no gode day ne saluynge  
 But streight with oute wordes of reherfing  
 Eueriche of them helpith to arme other  
 As frendly as he were his owen brother  
 And after that with sharpe speres stronge  
 They foyne2 eche at other wondre long  
 Thou myghtist wene that this palamon  
 In his feghting were a wode loun  
 And as a cruel tigre was arcite  
 As wilde bores can they to giddre smyte  
 That froten white as fome for ire wode  
 Up to the ancle faught they in thei2 blode  
 And in this wise I lette them fpyghting duelle  
 And forsoth I wil of the seus you telle  
 The desteny mynistre generalle  
 That executeth in the worlde ouer alle  
 The purueaunce that god hath seen biforn  
 So strange it is that though the worlde hath sworn  
 The contrary of a thing by ye or nay



yet somtyme it shal falle vpon a day  
 That fallith nat est in a thousand yere  
 And certaynly our appetites here  
 Be it of pease hate warre or loue  
 Alle is ruled by the sight aboue  
 This mene I now by myghty Theseus  
 That for to hunte is so desirous  
 And namely at the grete herte in May  
 That in his bedde there dwelt with him no day  
 That he nyght cladde and ryde for to ryde  
 With hunte and horne and houndes him beside  
 For in his huntynge hath he suche delite  
 That it is alle his ioye and alle his appetite  
 To be him selue the grete hertes bane  
 For after Mars he serued no dyane  
 Clere was the day as I haue tolde er this  
 And theseus with alle ioye and blis  
 With his yppolita the faire quene  
 And Emely yclothed alle in grene  
 And huntynge been they ryden ryally  
 And to the groue that stode there fast by  
 In whiche ther was an herte as men him tolde  
 Duke Theseus the streight wey hath holde  
 And to the lande he rideth fulle right  
 For thider was the hert wont to haue his flight  
 And ouer a broke and so forth on his wey  
 The duke wolde haue a cours of him or twey  
 With houndes suche as he list to comande  
 And whan this duke was come to the lande  
 And dre the sonne he looked and that anon  
 He was waar of Arcite and Palamon  
 That foughten breme as it were boles two  
 The bright swerdes went to and fro

So hidouſly that with the leſt ſtroke  
 He ſemed that it wolde haue felled an che  
 But what they were nothing he ne wote  
 This duke with his ſpores his courſer ſmote  
 And at a ſtert he was betwix them two  
 And pulled oute his ſuerde and ſayde ho  
 No more on payne of leſing of your hede  
 By myghty mars anone he ſhal be dede  
 That ſmyteth any ſtroke that I may ſe  
 But tellith me what my ſize men ye be  
 That been ſo hardy to fight here  
 Withoute any Juge or othez officere  
 As though it were in liſtes ryalty  
 This Palamon aunſuerd haſtey  
 And ſayde ſir what nedith wordes moo  
 We haue the deth deſerued bothe two  
 Two woful wretches be we two captyues  
 That been encombred of oure owne lyues  
 And as thou arte a rightful lorde and iuge  
 Ne yeue vs ne thez mercy ne refuge  
 But ſle me firſt for ſeint charite  
 But ſlee my fela we che as wele as me  
 Or ſle him firſt for though thou know him lite  
 He is thy mortalie foo this is arcite  
 That fro thy londe was banysſhed on his hede  
 For whiche he hath deſerued to be dede  
 For this is he that cam to thy gate  
 And ſayde that he hight philoſtrate  
 Thus he hath iaped the ful many a yere  
 And thou haſt made him thy chief ſquyer  
 And this is he that loueth Emely  
 For ſithnes the day is come that I ſhalle dye  
 I make pleynly my confeſſioun



## The knyghtes Tale

That I am that woful Palamon  
That hath thy pryson broke wickedly  
I am thy mortal foo and he am I  
That loueth so hote Emely the bright  
That I wol dye here present in her sight  
Therefore I aske deth of my Jewyse  
But she my felaw in the same wise  
For both haue we deserued to be slayn

His worthy Duke aunswered anone ageyn  
t And said this is a shorte conclusioun  
your own mouth be your confessioun  
Hath dampned you and I wil it recorde  
It nedith nat to peyne you with the corde  
ye shalbe dede by myghty Mars the rede  
The quene anone for verray womanhede  
Can to wepe and so did Emely  
And alle the ladies in that company  
Grette pyte was as them thought alle  
That euir suche a chaunce sholde be falle  
For gentylmen they were and of grette astate  
And no thing but for loue was this debate  
And saw theiȝ bloody woundes wyde and soze  
And alle cryden both lasse and more  
Haue mercy lordes bpon vs women alle  
And on theiȝ bare knees down they falle  
And wolde haue kyst his feet there as he stode  
Til at the last slaked was his mode  
For pyte renneth sone in gentyl hert  
And though he first for ire quoke and stert  
He considered shortly in a clause  
The trespass of them both and eke the cause  
And al though that his ire theiȝ gilt accused  
yet in his reason he them bothe excused

## The knyghtes Tale

As thus he thought that euery man  
Wol helpe him selue in loue as he can  
And deliuez him selue oute of pryson  
And eke in his hert he hadde compassion  
Of women for they were euez in one  
And in his gentyl hert he thought anoon  
And soft vnto him selue he sayd fy  
Upon a lord that wol haue no mercy  
But be a spoun both in word and dede  
To them that been in repentaunce and drede  
As wele as a proude dispitous man  
That wol mayntene that he first began  
That lord hath lptel of discrecion  
That in suche a caas can no diuision  
But wepeth pryde and humblenesse after one  
And shortly whan his ire is thus a gone  
He gan to loke on them with eyen blake and bygly  
And spake these wordes al on hye  
The god of loue a benedicite  
How myghty and how grete a lord is he  
Apenst his might thez gayneth non obstakyl  
He may be cleped a god for his myracle  
For he can make at his owyn guyse  
Of euery herte as him list deuyse  
So here this Arcite and this palamon  
That queyntly cam oute of my prison  
And myght haue lyued in Thebes ryally  
And knowen that I am thei2 mortal enemy  
And that thei2 deth lieth in my myght also  
And yet hath loue maugre their eyen two  
Brought them hithe2 both for to dye  
Now loketh is nat this an high folpe  
Who may be a foole But if that he loue



## The knyghtes Tale

Beholde for goddes sake that sitteth aboue  
Se how they blede be they nat wele arrayed  
Thus hath their lord the god of loue them payd  
Their wages and their fees of their seruice  
And yet they wene for to be ful wise  
That serue loue for aught that may falle  
But this is yet the best game of alle  
That she for whom they haue this Jolite  
Can them therfore as moche thanke as me  
She wote nomore of alle this hote fare  
By god than wote a cuckow or an hare  
But al must be assayd hote or colde  
A man must be a foole yong or olde  
I wote it by my selue fullong agoon  
For in my tyme a seruaunt was I one  
And therfore sithnes I knew of loues peyne  
And wote how sore it can a man distreyn  
As he that hath be caught in this laas  
I you foryeue alle hooly this trespass  
And atte request of the quene that kneleth here  
And eke of Emely my sustre dere  
And ye shal both anone vnto me swere  
That neuir mo ye shal my countrre dere  
Ne make warre on me nyght ne day  
But be my frendes in alle that ye may  
I you foryeue this trespass enerydele  
And they him sware his a shing faire and wele  
And him of lordship and mercy prayed  
And he them graunted and thus he sayd

    I speke of worthy lynage and richesse  
t    Though that she were a quene or a princeffe  
Eche of you both is worthy doutlesse  
To wedde whan tyme is. But neuirthelesse

## The knyghtes Tale

I speke as for my sustre Emely  
For whom ye haue this stryf and this Jelousy  
Ye wote your self ye may nat wedde two  
At oues. though that ye fight enir mo  
That one of you al be him loth or lief  
He mot go pyper in an Iuy leef  
This is to sey she may nat haue both  
Al be ye neuir so Jelous and so lothe  
And for thy I you put in this degre  
That eche of you shal haue his destene  
As him is shapyn and herkyn in what wise  
To here your ende of that I shal deuyse  
My wyl is this for plat conclusioun  
Withoute any more replicacioun  
yf that you lyketh take it for the best  
That eueriche of you shalle go where him lyst  
frely withoute raunson or daungere  
And this day fyfty wekes fer ne nere  
Eueriche of you shal bring an hundreth knyghtes  
Armed for lystes vp at al rightes  
Al redy to darzeyne here by batayle  
And this behote I you with oute fayle  
Upon my trouthe and as I am true knyght  
That whether of you both hath that myght  
That is to sey whether he or thou  
May with his hundreth as I spake of now  
Sle his contrary or oute of lystes dryue  
Him shal I yene Emely to wyue  
To whom that fortune yeueth so faire a grace  
The lystes shal I make on this place  
And god so wisely on my soule rewe  
As I shal euyne iuge be and true



## The knyghtes Tale

ye shal none other ende With me make  
That one of you ne shalbe dede or take  
And if ye thinke this is wele sayd  
Sayeth pouz auyse and hold you paide  
This is pouz end and pouz conclusioun  
Who lokith now lightly but Pagamon  
Who spryngeth bp for ioy but Arcite  
Who coude tel or who coude endite  
The ioy that made is in this place  
When Theseus hadde do so fayre a grace  
But down a knees went euery wight  
And thanked him With al theire myght  
And namely the Thebans oft sithe  
And thus With gode hope and herte blyth  
They take theire leue and homward they ryde  
To thebes With his olde walles wyde  
I trow men wolde it deme negligence  
yf I forpete to telle the dispence  
Of Theseus that goth so besily  
To make bp the lystes ryally  
That suche a noble theatre as it was  
I dar wele say in this worlde there nas  
The circuyte a myle therof was aboute  
Walled With stone and ditched rounde aboute  
Ronde was the shappe in maner of a compas  
Ful of degrees the hight of sixty paas  
That whan a man was sette in one degre  
He letted nat his felaw for to see  
Eastward there was a gate of marbyl white  
Westwarde suche an nother in thopposite  
And shortly to conclude suche a place  
Was none in erth of so lytel space  
For in the londe ther was no craftes man

## The knyghtes Tale

That geometry or arismetryh can  
Ne portreture ne haruar of ymages  
That Theseus ne pay mete and wages  
The theatre for to make and deuyse  
And for to do his ryte and his sacrifice  
He Estwarde hath by on the gate aboue  
In worship of Venus goddesse of loue  
Do make an autre and an Orazory  
And on the Westwarde in memory  
Of mars. hath he made suche an othez  
That cost large of gold a sothez  
And northward in a toure of the walle  
Of whyte alabaistre and rede coraal  
An oratory riche for to see  
In worship of dyane goddesse of chastite  
Hath Theseus do wrought in noble wise  
But yet hadde I forgete for to deuyse  
The noble harupng and the portretures  
The shap the countenaunce and the figures  
That weren in the oratours thre  
First in the temple of Venus thou mayst se  
Wrought in the walle ful pytously to beholde  
The broken slepis and the sighes colde  
The secrete terys and the weymentyng  
The feryp strokes and the desiring  
That loues folkes in this worlde enduryn  
The othes that thei couenauntes assuryn  
Plesaunce hope desire and fool hardynesse  
Beaute and youthe baudry and richesse  
Charmes and socery lesynges and flattery  
Dyspense besynesse and jelousy  
That wered of yelow gooldes a garland  
And a cuckow sitting on her hond



## The knyghtes Tale

Swetest instrumentes carolles and daunses  
Lust and arrape and eke the circumstaunces  
Of loue. Whiche that I rekyn and tel shal  
Be ordre were pepynted on the walle  
And mo than I can make mencion  
For sothly alle the mounte of Cicheron  
That venus hath her principaile duelling  
Was shewed on the wal her portryng  
With al the ioy and alle the lustynes  
Nat was foryeten the porters ydlnesse  
Ne Narcisus the fayre yore agoon  
Ne yet the folgy of king Salamon  
The enchauntment of medea and hardynesse  
Of Jason I wil nat now expresse  
Ne yet the strenght of hercules  
The enchauntment of medea and Circes  
Ne of turnus with his hard spers corage  
The riche Cresus captyf in seruage  
Thus may ye se that wisdom ne richesse  
Beaute strenght strenght ne hardynesse  
Ne may with venus horde champartie  
For as she lyst the worlde she may tye  
So alle these folke caught were in her laas  
Tyl they for wo ful oft sayd allas  
Suffiseth these ensamples one or two  
And though I coude rekyn a thousand mo  
The statne of venus glorious for to se  
Was naked. stietyng in the large see  
And fro the nauyl down al couerd she was  
With wawes grene and bright as any glas  
A cytole in her right hand hadde she  
And on her hede ful semely on to se  
A rose garland. fresshe and wel smelling

The knyghtes tale

A boue hez hede dounes also fly hering  
Biforn hez stode hez sonne cuppydo  
Upon his shulders wynges hadde he two  
And blynde he was as it is ofte seen  
A bow he baaz and arowes bright and hene  
Why sholde I nat eke telle you alle  
The portryng that was spon the walle  
Within the temple of myghty mars the rede  
Alle was peynted the walles in length and brede  
Lyke to the Estris of the gypsie place  
That hight the grete temple of mars in trace  
In that colde northerne frosty region  
There as Mars hath his souerayne mansioun  
Fyrst on the walle was peynted a forest  
In whiche thez duellith neyther man ne best  
With knotty and knerry barayn trees olde  
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to beholde  
In whiche ran as a rumbyl in a snow  
As though it a storme were shold brest euery bow  
And down ward on an hyl vndre abent  
There stode the temple of marce armypotent  
Wrought of alle burnyd stele the which the entre  
Was long and streyght and gastly for to se  
And theroute cam a rage and suche a beyse  
That it made alle the gates for to reyse  
The northron light at the doze shone  
For wyndow on the walle was thez none  
Throuth which men myght any light discern  
The dozes wez al of athemaundes etern  
p clenchyd ouerthwart and endlong  
With iron tow for to make it strong  
Euery pylle the temple for to susteyn  
Was tonne grete of yron bryght and shene



## The knyghtes Tale

There saw I first the derke ymagynyng  
Of felony and alle the compassyng  
The cruel ire rede as any gleden  
The pyhpurs and eke the pale drede  
The smylez with the knyfe bndre the cloke  
The shepen brennyng with the blaue smoke  
The treson of the murdring in the bedde  
The open werzys with woundes alle bledde  
Contake with bloody knyfe and sharpe manace  
And ful of chirlyng was that sorow place  
The sleer of him selue yet saw I there  
His herte blode hath bated al his chere  
The nayle y dryue in the shode an hight  
The colde deth with mouth gapyng by right  
A myddel of the temple sat my schauce  
With discomforte and sorow contenaunce  
yet saw I wodenesse laughyng in his rage  
Armed compleynt. othes and spers corage  
The carayne in the busshes with throte y coue  
A thousand slayn. and nat of qualme y stoune  
The tiraunt with the praye by force y raft  
The toun dystroied ther was no thing last  
yet saw I Brent the shippes hoppsteris  
The hunter strangled with the wilde berys  
The sow fretynge the childe in the cradyl  
The cooke y scalded for alle his long ladyl  
Nat forgettyng was the infortune of marie  
The carter ouer ryden with his own carte  
Bndre the whele ful lowe he lay a down  
There were also of martes deuyssoun  
The barbour the boucher and the smyth  
That forged sharpe swerdes in the stith  
And al a boue depaynted in a toure

## The knyghtes tale

So we I conquest sittynge in grete honour  
With the sharp swerd ouer his hede  
Hanging by a subtil twyned threde  
Dereynted was there the slaughter of Julius  
Of grete Nero and of Anthonius  
Al be it that thilke tyme they were vnborn  
Yet was their deth paynted ther bifore  
By manysshing of Mars right by figure  
So was it shewed right by portreture  
As it is depaynted in the sterres aboue  
Who shal be slayn or elles dede for loue  
Suffiseth one ensample in stozpes olde  
I may nat rekyn them alie though I wold  
The statue of Mars vpon a carte stode  
Armed and looked grym as he were wode  
And ouer his hede ther shynen two figures  
Of sterres that been called in scriptures  
That one puella hight that other Rubeus  
This god of armes was arayed thus  
A wolf ther stode bifore him at his feet  
With eyen rede and of a man he ete  
With subtil pensel was paynted this stozp  
In redoubtyng of Mars and of his glorie  
Now to the temple of dyane the chaste  
As shortly as I can I wil me hast  
To telle you alle the descripcion  
Depeynted been the walles vp and down  
Of huntynge and of shamefast chastite  
Ther saw I how woful Calistope  
Whan dyane greuyd was with her  
Was turned fro a woman to a bere  
And after was she made the lode sterre  
Thus was it peynted I can say no ferre



## The knyghtes Take

Her sonne is eke a sterre as men may se  
Ther saw I dane turned vntyl a tre  
I mene nat the goddesse dyane  
But peneus doughter which that hight dane  
There saw I atheon an hert y make d  
For vengeaunce that he saw dyane al naked  
I saw how that houndes haue him caught  
And fretyn him for they knew him naught  
yet y peynted was a litel furthemoze  
How athalante hunted the wyld boze  
And meliager and many othez mo  
For which dyane wrought him care and woo  
There saw I many a nothez wondre stozp  
The whiche me list nat draw in memory  
This goddesse on an hert high is sete  
With smale houndes al aboute her fete  
And vnderneath her feet she had a mone  
weyng it was and shold wane sone  
In gawdy grene her statue clothed was  
With bow in hond and arowes in a caas  
Her eyen cast she ful low a doun  
There pluto hath his derhe region  
A woman traueling was her bifez  
But for her childe was so long vnborn  
ful pytously lucyna gan she calle  
And sayd help for thou mayst best of alle  
wele coude he peynte lyuely that it wrought  
With many a flozpn he his he wroght  
    Dw been these lystes made and Theseus  
n That at his grete cost hath arayed thus  
The temples and the theatre euerydel  
Whan it was doon it lyked him wondre wele  
But stynt I byl of Theseus a lite

## The knyghtes tale

And speke of Palamon and Arcite  
The day approacheth of theire retornynge  
That eueryche shold an hundreth knyghtes bring  
The batayle to darreyn as I you tolde  
And to Athenes theire couenaunt for to holde  
Bath euerych of them brought an hundreth knyghtes  
Wele y armed for the warre at al rightes  
And spherly there trowed many a man  
That neuiz sith the worlde began  
As for to speke of knyghthode of theire hond  
As fer as god hath made see and lond  
Was of so few so noble a company  
For euery wight that loued cheualry  
And wolde his thankes haue a passing name  
Bath prayd that he might be of that game  
And wel was him that therto chosen was  
For if thez fyll to morow suche a caas  
ye know wel that euery lusty knyght  
That loueth paramours and hath his myght  
Were it in england or elles wher  
They wolde theire thankes willeen to be thez  
To fight for a lady a benedicite  
It were a lusty sight for to se  
And right so faireth they with Palamon  
With him thez went knyghtes many oon  
Som wold be armed in habergeon  
Som in brest plate and in light gippon  
And som wol haue a peiz of plate large  
And som wolde haue a pryce sheld and targe  
Som wold be armed on his legges wele  
And haue an ay and som a mace of stele  
Thez is no new guyse but it was holde  
Armed were they as I haue tolde



## The knyghtes Tale

Eueriche after his own opunyon  
There mayst thou se compynge with Palamon  
Figurge him selue the grette kyng of trace  
Blake was his berde and manly was his face  
The circles of his eyen in his hede  
They glowden betwix yelow and rede  
And lyke a gryffyn lohed he aboute  
With hempte heres in his browes stoute  
His lymes grette his braunes herde and strong  
His shuldres brode his armes rounde and long  
And as the gypse was in his countre  
Fulke high vpon a chare of golde stode he  
With four white bores in the trays  
In stede of cote armure ouer his harnys  
With nayles yelow and bright as any golde  
He hadde a bere shynne cool blake for orde  
His long heres were hempt behinde his bahe  
As any rauyn fether it shone for blake  
A wrethe of golde arme grette of huge weyght  
Vpon his hede sat ful of stons bright  
Of fyn rubyes and of fyn diamauntes  
Aboute his chare ther went alauntes  
Twenty and moo as grette as any steer  
To hunte atte youn oz elles at the deer  
And folowed him with mosel fast y bounde  
Colers of golde and tozettes fylled rounde  
An hundreth lordes he hadde in his rowte  
Armed wel with bertes sterne and stoute  
y the Arcite as men in stozp fynde  
W The strong Emetrius the kyng of ynd  
Vpon a bay stede y trapped alle in stile  
Armed with a cloth of gold y diapred wele  
Cam ridynge lyke god of armes marce

## The knyghtes tale

His cloth armure was of cloth of tarce  
Couched with perles white rounde and grete  
His sadyl was of brent golde new y bete  
A mantelet on his shulders hanging  
Bret ful of rubyes bright as fyre sparkling  
His bright crispe here lyke rynges were ronne  
And that was yelow and glitered as the sonne  
His nose was high his eyen bright cytrine  
His lippes rounde his colour was sangwyne  
A few fraikes in his face were sprent  
Betwix yelow and som dele blake y meynt  
And as a loun he loked aboute faste  
Of yowere of age I him cast  
His herde was wele begonne for to spring  
His voyce was as a trompe thondring  
Upon his hede he wered of laurel grene  
A garland freshe and lusty for to sene  
Upon his honde he baar for his dedwyte  
An eggle tame as any lyly white  
An hundreth knyghtes hadd he with him there  
Al armed saue theire hedes in alle theire gere  
Were richly arrayed in al maner thinges  
Trustith wele al erles dukes and kinges  
Were gadred in this noble company  
For loue and encrece of cheualrye  
Aboute this king there ronnen on euery parte  
Wele many a tame lioun and libart  
And in this wise the lordes alle and som  
Been on the sonday to the cite com  
Aboute pry me and in the towne a light  
This Theseus this duke this worthy knyght  
When he hadde brought them into his cite  
And ynned them eueryche at his degre



He festith them and doth so grete labour  
 To ease them and to do them alle honoure  
 That men wenen that no mannes witte  
 Of none astate ne coude amende it  
 The mynstralcy the seruice at the feste  
 The grete gistes to the moost and the leste  
 The riche arrape of Theseus paleys  
 Ne who sat first ne last vpon the dese  
 Or what ladies fayrest been or best daunsynge  
 Or which of them can best daunce or synge  
 Ne who moost felyngly speke th of loue  
 What ha whes syt on the pirches aboue  
 What houndes lye in the floore down  
 Of al this make I no mencion  
 But of the effecte that thynketh me best  
 Now comyth the poynthe and herkyne if ye lyst  
 He sonday at nyght or day began to spring  
 t When palamon herd the larke synge  
 Al though it were nat day by oures two  
 Yet song the larke and palamon right tho  
 With holy herte and with an high corage  
 Is ryse to wende on his pilgramage  
 Vnto the blissful Sotherea benygne  
 I mene venus honourable and digne  
 And in her houre he walked forth apace  
 Vnto the lystes there her temple was  
 And down he knelith and with humble chere  
 And with hert soze he sayde as ye shal here  
 Fayrest o fayre olady myn venus  
 Doughter to Iouis and spouse to Icanus  
 That gladdest al the mount of Sitheron  
 For that loue that thou haddest to Adon  
 Haue pytee on my byttre teres smert

The knyghtes Tale

And take my humbly prayer to thy hert  
Alas I haue no langage for to telle  
The effecte ne the turment of myn helle  
Myn hert may nat myn harmes be wrey  
I am so sorowful that I can nat sey  
But mercy lady bright that knowest wele  
My thought and seest the harmes that I fele  
Considre this and rewe vpon my soze  
As wysly as I shal for euirmore  
Enforth my myght thy true seruauent to be  
And holde warre lady alwey with chastyte  
That I make myn auowe so ye me help  
I kepe nat of armes for to pelp  
Ne I aske nat to morow for to haue the victory  
Ne renoun in this caas ne beyng glory  
Of pryse of armes to blow vp and down  
But I wolde fully haue possioun  
Of E melody and dye in her seruice  
Fynde thou the manere how and what wyse  
I reche nat but it may bettre be  
To haue victory of them or they of me  
So that I haue my lady in myn armes  
For though so be that mars be god of armes  
Your vertue is so grete in heuyn aboue  
That if thou lyst I shalle haue my loue  
Thy temple wol I worship euirmo  
And on an autre where I ryde or goo  
I wol do sacrifice and spres bete  
And if ye wyl nat so my lady swete  
Than pray I the to morow with a spere  
That Arcite me though the herte bere  
Than reche I nat whan I haue lost my lyf  
Though that Arcyte wedde her to wif



## The knyghtes Tale

This is the effect and ende of my prayez  
pene me my loue my blissed lady dere  
Whan that the oryson was done of palamon  
His sacrifice he did and that anone  
Ful pitously With alle circumstaunces  
Al telle I nat now his obseruaunces  
And alle the statue of Vennus shoke  
And made a signe wherby that he toke  
That his prayez accepted was that day  
For though the figure shewed delay  
yet wist he wele that graunted was his bone  
And with gladd herte he went him home sone  
The thriddeoure equal that palamon  
Began to Venus temple for to goon  
þ þ rose the sonne and þ þ rose E melody  
And to the temple of dyane gan hys  
Her maydens that she with her thider had  
Ful redely With them the fyre they had  
Thence the clothes and the remenaunt alle  
That to the sacrifice longen shalle  
The hornes ful of methe as was the gypse  
There lacked naught to doon her sacrifice  
Smoking the temple ful of clothes fayre  
This E melody With hert debonayr  
Her body wesse With water in a wellle  
But how she did there I dar nat telle  
But it be any thing in generalle  
And yet it were a game for to here alle  
To him that menyth wele it were no charge  
But it is gode a man be at his large  
Her bright here was kempt and bntressed alle  
And a crowne of grene oke fery alle  
Upon her hede was set ful fayre and mete

## The knyghtes Tale

Two fyres on the autre can she bete  
And did her thinges as men may beholde  
In state of Thebes and in bokes olde  
Whan kyndled was the fyre With pytous chere  
Unto dyane she spake as ye may here  
O chaste goddesse of the wode grene  
To whom both heuyn and erth and see is sene  
Quene of the regne of pluto derke and low  
Goddesse of maydens that my hert hast know  
Ful many a yere and wotest what I desyre  
As kepe me fro the vengeaunce and thyng ire  
That Attheon abought trulpy  
Chaste goddesse wele wotest thou that I  
Desire to be a mayden alle my lyf  
Ne neuiz wol I be loue ne wyf  
I am thou wotest yet of thy company  
A mayden. and loue huntynge and venory  
And for to walken in the wodes wilde  
And nat to be a wif and be with childe  
Naught wil I know company of man  
Now help me lady sithnes thou mayst and can  
For the thre fourmes that thou hast in the  
And palamon that hath suche loue to me  
And eke Arcite that loueth me so sore  
This grace I pray the withouten more  
As send loue and pease bitwix them two  
And from me turne awey thei herkes so  
That al thei hote loue and alle thei desire  
And al thei besy turment and al thei fyre  
Be queynte or turned in a nother place  
And if so be thou wil do me no grace  
Or if my desteny be shapen soo  
That I shal nedes haue one of them two



## The knyghtes Tale

As send me him that moost desireth me  
Beholde goddesse of cleene chastite  
The byttre teres that on my chekes falle  
Sithnes thou art a mayde and hepar of vs alle  
My maydenhede thou kepe and wele conserue  
And whiles I lyne a mayden wol I the serue  
The fyres brenne vpon the auters clere  
Whil Emely was thus in her praper  
But sodenly she saw a light queynt  
For right anone oon of the fyres queynt  
And quiked a pen and after that anone  
That othez fyre was queynt and alle agone  
And as it queynt it made a whistling  
As doon these wete brondes in their brennyng  
And at the brondes ende out ran anone  
As it were droppes bloody many one  
For why she so sore agast was Emely  
Than she was almoost mad and gan to cry  
For she ne wist what it signified  
But only for fere thus hath she cryed  
And wept that it was pyte to here  
And therewithalle dyane gan appere  
With bow in honde right as an huntresse  
And sayd doughter stynt thyn heuynesse  
Among the goddes an high it is affermed  
And by etern worde writen and confermed  
Thou shalt be wedded vntyl one of them two  
That haue for the so moche care and wo  
But on to whiche of them may I nat telle  
Fare wele for I may no lenger duelle  
The fyres whiche on myn autre brenne  
Shal the declare or that thou go henne  
Thyn auenture of loue as in this caas

And with that worde the arowes in the caas  
 Of the goddesse claterynge fast and ryng  
 And forth she went and made a banysshing  
 For whiche this Emely astonyed was  
 And sayd what a mounteth this alas  
 I put me vnder thy protection  
 Dyane and in thy disposicion  
 And home she goth anone the next wey  
 This is the effecte ther is no more to sey  
 In the next houre of mars after this

Write vnto the temple Walked is  
 a Of fyers mars to do his sacrifice  
 With alle the rightes of his paynem wise  
 With pytous hert and high deuocioun  
 Right thus to Mars he sayde his oryson  
 O strong god that in the rygnes colde  
 Of trace honoured art and lorded yhold  
 And hast in euery regne and euery lond  
 Of armes al the Brydel in thy hond  
 And them fortunest as the list best deuyse  
 Accept of me my pytous sacrifice  
 If so be that my thought may deserue  
 And that my myght be worthy to serue  
 Thy godhede that I may be one of thy  
 Than pray I the rewe on my pyne  
 For that peyn and that hote fyre  
 In whiche thou brennest whilom for desire  
 Whan that thou vsedyst the beaute  
 Of fayre yong fresche Venus fre  
 And haddest her in thy armes at thy wil  
 And though the ones a tyme myssyl  
 Whan Vulcanus had caught the in his laas  
 And fond the liggynge by his wif alas



For thiske sorow that was in thyn hert  
 Haue routhe as wele bpon my peynes sme<sup>rt</sup>  
 I am yong and ynkonnyng as thou wotest  
 And as I trow with loue offended moost  
 Than euez was any lyues creatur  
 For she that doth me alle this wo endure  
 Ne rekethe neuer whether I synke or flete  
 And wele I wote or she me mercy hete  
 I must with strengith wyne hez in the place  
 And wele I wote withoute help and grace  
 Of the may nat my strenght abyde  
 Than help me lord to morow in my batayle  
 For that fyre that whylem brent the  
 As wele as that fyre now brenneth me  
 And do that I to morow haue the victory  
 My the trauayle and thyn be the glory  
 Thy souerayn temple wil I moost honouren  
 Of any place alwey and moost lauboren  
 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes strong  
 And in thy temple I wille my baner hong  
 And alle the armes of my company  
 And euirmore vnto the day I dye  
 Stern fyre I wol bifoze the fynde  
 And eke to this auowe I wil me bynde  
 My berd my here that hangith long a down  
 That neuir yet felt offensioun  
 Of rasour ne of shere I wille the yene  
 And be thy true seruaunt whiles I lyue  
 Now lord haue routhe bpon my sorowes soze  
 yene me the victory I aske no more  
 The prayer stynt of Arcite the strong  
 The rynges that on the temple doze hong  
 And eke the dozes clattered so fast

## The knyghtes Tale

Of whiche arcite som what him agast  
The fyres brent vpon the auters bright  
That it gan al the temple for to light  
A swete smel anone the grounde vp pas  
And arcite anone his hond vp gaf  
And more encence in to the fyre cast  
With othez rytes mo and at the last  
The statue of mars began his haubreke ryng  
And with that sounde he herd a murmur yng  
ful low and dym and sayd thus. victory  
for whiche he paue to Mars honour and glory  
And thus with ioy and hope wile to fare  
Arcite anone to his ynne is fare  
As fayn as foule is of the bright sonne  
And right anone suche stryf is thez begon  
for that grauntyng in hebyn aboue  
Betwix venus goddesse of loue  
And mars the sterne god armepotent  
That iupiter was besy it to stynt  
Tyl that the pale saturnus the colde  
That knew so many of auentures olde  
ffond in his olde experience and arte  
That he ful sone hath pleased euery parte  
As soth is sayd elde hath grete auantage  
In elde is both wisdom and vsage  
Men may the olde oute renne but nat oute ride  
Saturne anone to stynt stryf and drede  
al be it that it is ayenst his kynde  
Of al this triue he can remedies fynde  
My dere doughter venus quod Saturne  
My cours that hath so wyde for to turne  
Hath more powez than wote any man  
My is the drenchyng of the see so wan



## The knyghtes Tale

Myn is the pryson in the derke cote  
Myn is the strangeling and hanging by the throte  
The murmure and the chorles rebelling  
The groynyng and the pryue enpoysonyng  
I do vengeaunce and playn correction  
Whyles I duelle in the signe of the lyoun  
Myn is the ruyne of the high halles  
The falling of the toures and the walles  
Upon the mynour or the carpentere  
I slough Sampson shakynge the pylar  
And myn been the maladyes colde  
The derke treason and the castes olde  
My lokynge is the fadre of pestilence  
Now wepe nomore I shal doon diligence  
That palamon that is thy own knyght  
Shal haue his lady as thou him behyght  
And Mars shal kepe his knyght yet neuirtheless  
Betwix you thez must be somtyme pease  
Al be ye nat of one complexioun  
That causeth alday suche deuysioun  
I am thy al redy at thy wille  
Wepe nomore I wil thy lust fulfyllen  
Now wil I stynt of the goddes aboue  
Of Mars and Venus goddesse of loue  
And telle you al playnly as I can  
The grete effecte for whiche I began  
It was the fest in athenes that day  
And eke the lusty season of that may  
Made euery wight to be in suche plesaunce  
That alle that monday iust they and daunce  
And spenden it in Venus high seruyse  
And bicause that they shulden aryse  
Erly for to se that grete sight

## The knyghtes tale

Unto theire rest went they at nyght  
And on the morow whan day gan spring  
Of horse and noyse harneys and claterynge  
Ther was in hostelryes alle aboute  
And to the paleys rode ther many a route  
And lordes upon stedes and palfreys  
There mayst thou se a deuy syng of harneys  
So vncourte and so riche and wrought so wele  
Of goldsmythrye of brouderie and of stele  
The sheldes bright testeres and trappouzes  
Golde helwen hermes haubrekes and cote armures  
Lordes in paramentes on theiꝝ coursers  
Knyghtes of retenue and eke squyers  
Mayling the speres and helmes bokelinge  
Gyrding of sheldes with leyners lasinge  
There as nede is they were nothing ydel  
The fomp stedes on the golden brydel  
Gnawing. and fast the armerers also  
With fylle and hameꝝ pricking to and fro  
yemen on fote and compys many one  
With shorte staues thicke as they may gone  
Pyppes trompes naconers and clariouns  
That in the bataylle blowne bloody soundes  
The paleys ful of peple vp and down  
There thre there ten holding theiꝝ questiou  
Demyng of the Theban knyghtes two  
Some sayde thus som sayd it shalbe so  
Som held with him with the blak berd  
Som with the balled som with the thicke hered  
Som sayde he lohed grym and he wold fight  
He hath a sparth of xx pounde of wyght  
Thus was the halle ful of deupnyng  
Long after that the sonne gan to spring



## The knyghtes Tale

Thet grete Theseus that of his sleep awaked  
With mynstralcye and noyse that was made  
Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche  
Tyl that the theban knyghtes bothe pryche  
Honoured were and into the paleys fet  
Duke Theseus is at the wyndow set  
Arayed right as he were god in trone  
The peple precead thider ward ful sone  
Him for to seyn and doon high reuerence  
And to herkyn his best and his sentence  
An herowde on a scaffold made an D  
Tyl al the noyse of the peple was do  
And whan he saw the peple of noyse al styl  
Thus shewed he the myghty dukes wille  
The lord hath of his high discrecioun  
Considred that it were distructioun  
To gentyl blode to fighten in this wise  
Of mortal batayle now in this emprise  
Wherfore to shapen that they shulde nat dye  
He wil his first purpos modifye  
Noman therfore on peyne of losse of lyf  
No maner shotte ne pollay ne short knyf  
In the listes send or thider bring  
Ne short swerd for to stike with poynt bityng  
Ne noman ne draw ne bere it be his syde  
Ne noman shal vnto his felaw ryde  
But one cours with a sharp y grounde spere  
Tropnyng if him lyst on fote him selue to were  
And he that is at myschief shal be take  
And nat slayn but be brought to the stake  
That shal be ordeyned on either syde  
But thider he shal by force and there abyde  
And if so falle the chescyn be take

On either syde or elles sleeth his make  
 Nolengre shal the turneyng last  
 God spede you go forth and ley on fast  
 With long swerdes and maces ley on your fylle  
 Both now your wey this is the lordes wil  
 The voyce of peple touched the heuy  
 So loude cryed they with mery steuy  
 God saue suche a lord that is so gode  
 He willith nat distructioun of blode  
 Up goth the trumpes and the melody  
 And to the listes ridyth this company  
 By ordenaunce through out the cyte large  
 Banged with cloth of golde and nat with sarge  
 Ful lyke a lord this noble duke gan ryde  
 These two Thebans upon either syde  
 And after rode the queene and Emely  
 And after that a nother company  
 Of one and other after their degre  
 And thus they passe through the cyte  
 And to the listes come they betyme  
 It nas nat of the day fully prync  
 Whan sette was Theseus riche on higg  
 Spolita the queene and Emely  
 And other ladies in degrees aboute  
 Unto the fetes preseth alle the route  
 And westward through the pates bndre marte  
 Arcite and eke the houndred of his parte  
 With baner rede is entred right anone  
 And in that selue moment palamon  
 Is bndre venus estward in that place  
 With baner white and hardy chere of face  
 In al the worlde to seke up and down  
 So euyn withoute any variacioun



## The knyghtes Tale

There nere suche companeyes twey  
For there was none so wise that coude sey  
That any had of othez anauntage  
Of worthynesse ne estate ne age  
So euyn were they chosen for to gesse  
And in two renges feyre they them dresse  
And whan that theire names red were euerichoon  
That in thei2 nombre gyle were the2 none  
Tho were the pates shyt and cryed was loude  
Do now your deuour pong knyghtes proude  
The heroudes left thei2 pricking bp and down  
Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun  
The2 is nomore to sey but est and west  
In goth the sperys ful sadly in the rest  
In goth the sharpe spore in the syde  
The2 seen men who can iust and who can ryde  
There shpyeryng shaftes bpon sheldes thicke  
He feleth through the hart spoon the pryck  
Up springeth speres twenty fote on hight  
Out goon the swerdys as the siluer bright  
The helmes they to hewen and to shrede  
Out brest the blode with sterne stremes rede  
With myghty maces the bones they to brist  
He through the thickest of the throng can thrist  
The2 stomblyn stedys strong and down goth al  
He rolleth vndre fote as doth a bal  
He fopneth on his feet with his trunchon  
And he hurtli2 with his hors adoun  
He through the body is hurt and sithnes take  
Agayn his hede and brought to the stake  
As for ward was right there he must abyde  
A nother led is on that othe2 syde  
And somtyme doth them Theseus to rest

Them for to refresshe and drynke if that they lyst  
 ful oft a day haue the Thebans two  
 Toggydez y met and wrought eyther wo  
 Vnhorsed hath eche one of them twey  
 Ther is no tygre in the vale of galegophey  
 When that her whelp is stolen when it is lyte  
 So cruel on the hunt as is Arcite  
 For ielous hert vpon this palamon  
 Ne in belmarpe ther is no fel byoun  
 That hunted is for angre wood  
 Ne of his pray desireth so the blode  
 As palamon to sle his foo Arcite  
 The ielous strokes on theire helmes byte  
 Dute rynneth blood on both theire sydes rede  
 Som tyme an end ther is of euery dede  
 For or the sonne vnto rest went  
 The strong king Emetrius gan hent  
 This palamon as he fought with Arcite  
 And made his swerd depe in his fleshe bite  
 And by the force of twenty was he take  
 Vnpolden and drawe to the stake  
 And in the rescous of this palamon  
 The strong king Pigurte is born a down  
 And king Emetrius for aile his strenght  
 Is born oute of his sadyl a swerde lenght  
 So hit him palamon or he were take  
 But al for noght he was brought to the stake  
 His hardy hert ne myght him help noght  
 He must abyde whan he was caught  
 By force and eke by composicioun  
 Who soroweth now but woful palamon  
 That must nomore go a pen to fight  
 And whan that Theseus hadde seye that fight



## The knyghtes Tale

Unto the folke that fougheten thus echone  
He cryed than hoo nomore for it is done  
I wol be true iuge and nat party  
Arcyte of Thebes shal haue Emely  
That by his fortune hath her feyr y wonne  
Anone there is a noyse of peple begon  
For ioy of this so loude and high with alle  
That it semed that the cystes shuld falle  
W     Bat can now sayre Venus done aboue  
       What sayeth she what doth the quene of loue  
But wepith so for wantpugg of her wille  
Tyl that her teres in the listes fylle  
She sayd I am shamed doutlesse  
Saturne sayd doughter holde thy pease  
Mars hath his wille the knyght hath his bone  
And by my hede thou shalt be eased sone  
The trompettes with the lowde mynstralsye  
The heroudes that ful loude ylle and crye  
Been in theiȝ ioy for the wel of dane Arcite  
But herk neth me and stynt noyes alite  
Whiche a myracle there befelle anone  
This spers Arcite hath his helme of done  
And on a courser for to shew his face  
He pryched endlong the large place  
Rohpyng bpward bnto this Emely  
And she ageyn him cast a frendly eye  
And was alle in his chere as in his hert  
Dute of the grounde a fyre infernal stert  
From Pluto sent at the request of saturne  
For whiche his horse for fere gan to turne  
And lept a syde and foundred as he lepe  
And oz that Arcite may take kepe  
He pight him on the pomel of his hede

That in the place he lay as he were dede  
 His brest to brosten with the sadde bow  
 As blake he lay as any coole crowe  
 So was the blode ronne in his face  
 Anone he was born oute of the place  
 With herte sore to Theseus paleys  
 Tho was he coruyn oute of his harnes  
 And in a bedde brought ful fayre and blyue  
 For he was pet in memory and alpye  
 And alwey cryng after Emele  
 Duke Theseus with alle his company  
 Is come home to Athenes his cyte  
 With alle blis and grete solemnyte  
 Al be it that this auenture was falle  
 He nolde nat discomforte them alle  
 Men sayd eke that Arcite shuld nat dye  
 He shulde be hered of his malady  
 And of a nother thing they wer sayn  
 That of them alle ther was noon slayn  
 Alle were they sore hurt and namely one  
 That with a spere was thrilled the brest bone  
 The othe woundes and the broke armes  
 Som had salues and some had charmes  
 Fermacyes of herbes and eke sane  
 They dronken for they wold thei lyues hane  
 For whiche this noble duke as he wel can  
 Comforteth and honoured euery man  
 And made reuel al the long nyght  
 Vnto the straunge lordes as was right  
 Ne there was holden no discomfytynge  
 But as a iustes or a tourneyng  
 For there was holden no discomfiture  
 For fayllynge nys but auenture



He to Beladde By force Bnto the stake  
 Wyeldyn and With twenty knyghtes take  
 One pryson allone Withoute mo  
 And harped forth by arme fote and too  
 And eke his stede dryuen forth With staues  
 With fotemen both yemen and eke knaues  
 It nas y retted him no bilony  
 There may noman clepe it colwardrye  
 For whiche anone duke Theseus let crye  
 To stynten alle rancouz and enuie  
 The degre as wel in one syde as in othez  
 And either syde lyke as othez Brothez  
 And gaf them gifytes after thei degre  
 And fully held a fest daies thre  
 And conueyed the kinges Worthylly  
 Out of his towyn a iourney largely  
 And home went euery man the right wey  
 There was nomore but far wele haue gode day  
 o f this Batayle I wil nomore endite  
 But speke of palamon and arcite  
 Suellith the brest of Arcite and the soze  
 Encreseth at his hert ay more and more  
 The cloterred blode for any lchecraft  
 Corruptyth and in his bouke is last  
 That netheze beyne blode ne ventusynge  
 Ne drinke of herbes may be his helppynge  
 The vertue expulssyf for anymal  
 Fro that vertue y cleped natural  
 Ne may the benym boyde ne expelle  
 The pypes of his longes gan to swelle  
 And euery lacerz in his brest adoun  
 Is shent With benym and corrupcioun  
 Him gayneth nothing for to get his lyf

## The knyghtes Tale

Dompte by Ward and down Ward layatys  
Al is to bresten thilke reggioun  
Nature hath in him no domynacioun  
And certyanly there nature wil nat wirche  
Fare wele phispeke go here the man to the chirche  
This is al and som Arcite must dye  
For whiche he sendith after Emely  
And palamon that was his cosyn dere  
Than sayd he thus as ye shal after here  
Nat may the woful spyret in myn hert  
Declare a poynte of al my sorowes smert  
To you my lady that I loue moost  
But biqueth the seruice of my goost  
To you abouen euery creature  
Sithnes that my lyf may no lenger dure  
Allas the woo allas the peynes strong  
That I for you haue suffered and so long  
Allas the deth allas my Emely  
Allas the departyng of oure company  
Allas my hertes quene allas my wif  
My hertes lady ender of my lyf  
What is this worlde what asketh men to haue  
Now with his loue now colde in his graue  
Alone withouten any company  
Fare wele my swete foo my Emely  
And soft take me in your armes tway  
For the loue of god and herkeneth what I say  
I haue here with my cosyn palamon  
Had stryf and rancor many a day agone  
For loue of you and of my jelousye  
And Iupiter so wisely my soule try  
To speken of a seruaunt properly  
With circumstaunces alle truly



## The knyghtes Tale

That is to seyn trouthe honouur and knyghtshede  
Wisdom humbleste estate and high kynned  
freedom and alle that longith to that arte  
So Jupiter haue of my soule parte  
As in this worlde right now know I none  
So worthy to be loued as palamon  
That serupth you and wol do alle his lyf  
And if that euir ye shal be a wif  
Forgetteth nat Palamon the gentylman  
And with that worde his speche fayle gan  
For fro his fete vnto his brest was come  
The colde of dethe that hath him ouercome  
And yet more ouer for in his armes two  
The bytalle strengith is lost and al ago  
Only the intellectys withouten more  
That duclyth in his hert syke and sore  
Can fayle whan the herte felith dethe  
Duffeth his eyen to and fayleth his breth  
But on his lady yet cast he his eye  
His last worde was mercy E melody  
His spyret chaunged the hous and went there  
As I can neuir I can nat telle where  
There I stynt I am nat deuynester  
Of soules fynde I nat in this regystre  
Ne me lyst the opunpons to telle  
Of them though they writen where they duelle  
Arcyte is colde there mars his soule gup  
Now wol I speke forth of E melody  
Shryght E melody and owleth palamon  
And The seus his suster toke anone  
Swonynge and bare her fro the cors a wey  
What helpith it to tary forth the day  
To telle how she wept both eue and morow

## The knyghtes Tale

For in suche caas Women haue suche sorow  
Whan that theiſr huſbondes be fro them goo  
That for the more part they ſorowen ſo  
Or elles falle in ſuche a malady  
That at the laſt certaynly they dye  
Inſynpte been the ſorowes and the teres  
Of olde folke and folke of tendre yeres  
In al the toun for deth of this Theban  
For him theſe wepith bothe childe and man  
So grete wepyng was theſe none certayn  
Whan Ector was brought alle freſſhe y ſlayn  
To troye. alas the pyte that was there  
Crachyng of chekes rentyng the of here  
Why woldeſt thou be dede theſe Wymmen crye  
And haddeſt golde ynough and Emely  
No man myght glade Theſeus  
Saupng his olde fader egeus  
That knew this worldes tranſmutacioun  
As he hadde ſeen it chaunge by and down  
Joy after wo and wo after gladneſſe  
And ſhe wed him enſample and lykneſſe  
Right as theſe deyde neuiz man quod he  
That he ne lyued in erth in ſom degre  
Right ſo theſe lyued neuiz man he ſayde  
In alle this worlde that ſomty me he ne deyde  
This worlde is but a through fare ful of wo  
And we be pylgrames paſſyng to and fro  
Deth is an ende of euery worldes ſore  
And ouer al this yet ſayde he mekyl more  
To this effecte ful wiſely to enhorſte  
The peple that they ſhulde them recomforſte  
Duke Theſeus with alle his beſp cure  
Caſt now where that the ſepulture



Of gode Arcite may best y maked be  
 And eke moost honourable in his degre  
 And at the last he toke conclusioun  
 That there first Arcite and palamon  
 Hadde for loue the batayle them bitwene  
 That in that selue groue swete and grene  
 There as he hadde his amorous desires  
 His complaynt and for loue his hote fyres  
 He wolde make a fyre in whiche the office  
 Funerall he myght fully accomplice  
 And comaunded anone to hache and to he W  
 The okes olde and ley them on a re W  
 In culppys wele araped for to brenne  
 His officers with swyft feet they renne  
 And ryden anone at his comaundment  
 And after this The seus hath sent  
 After a bere and he it ouer spradde  
 With clothes of gorde the richest that he hadde  
 And of the same sote he clothed Arcite  
 Upon his bondes his gloues white  
 And on his hede a crowne of laurez grene  
 And in his honde a swerde ful bright and kene  
 He layde him bare the visage on the bere  
 Ther with he wippte that pyte was to here  
 And for the peple sholde se him alle  
 Whan it was day he brought him in the halle  
 That roreth on the cryng and the soun  
 Tho cam this woful theban palamoun  
 With flotered berd and rugged as the heres  
 In clothes blake dropped al with teres  
 And passing othez of wepyng Bmely  
 The rewfullest of alle the company  
 And in a smoch as the seruice shuld be

## The knyghtes Tale

The more noble and riche in his degre  
Duke Theseus leet thre stedes forth bring  
That trapped were in stele al glytering  
And couered with the armes of Arcite  
And eke vpon the stedes grete and white  
Ther sattyn folke of whiche one bare his shelde  
A nother a spere vpon his shulders helde  
The thridde bare with him his bow turkeys  
Of brend golde was the caas and the harneys  
And ryden forth a paas with sorowful chere  
Toward the groue as ye shal after here  
The noblest of the grekes that there were  
Vpon their bakes carpyden the here  
With slache paas and eyen rede and wete  
Through oute the cyte by the master strete  
That spradde was al with blake and wondre hye  
Right of the same is the strete y wyre  
Vpon the right honde went olde egeus  
And on that othez syde duke Theseus  
With besselles of golde in their hond ful fyne  
And ful of hony mylke blode and wyne  
Eke palamon with ful grete company  
And after that cam woful Emely  
With fyre in honde as was that tyme the guyse  
To do the office of the funeralle seruise  
High labour and ful grete apparrelling  
Was at the seruyce of the fyre making  
That with his grene toppe the heuyh raught  
And twenty fawdom of brede the armes straught  
This is to sey the bowes were so brode  
Of stra we first was leyde many a lode  
But hou the fyre was made vpon an hyght  
Ne eke the names how the trees hyght



## The knyghtes Tale

As oke fyrre byrche as the alder holme popule  
Maple thorn beche as pe box ches ten lynd laure  
Wylowe elme plane hasil and whypultre  
How they were felled shal nat be tolde for me  
Ne hou the gotes rennyng by and down  
Dissherted of thei habitacioun  
In whiche they woned in rest and pease  
Nymphes faunes and a madrides  
Ne hou the bestes and the byrdes alle  
Fledde for fere whan the wode gan falle  
Ne hou the grounde agast was of the light  
That was nat wont to se the sonne bright  
Ne hou the fyre was couched first with stre  
And than with drye stiches clouen on thre  
And than with grene wode and spycery  
And than with cloth of golde and with perry  
And garlandes hanging with many a floure  
The myrrour the encence with suete odoure  
Ne hou Arcite lay among alle this  
Ne what riches aboute his body ther is  
Ne hou that Emely as was the gypse  
Put in the fyre of funeralle seruice  
Ne hou she swooned whan made was the fyre  
Ne what she spake ne what was her desire  
Ne what Jewelles men in the fyre cast  
Whan that the fyre was grete and brenned fast  
Ne hou som cast thei shelde and som thei spere  
And of thei westmentes whiche that they were  
And cuppes ful of mylke and blode  
In to the fyre that brent as it were wode  
Ne how the grekes with an hugge route  
Ther ryden al the fyre aboute  
Upon the left honde with an high shoutryng

## The knyghtes Tale

And thryes With theire speres clatering  
And thryes hou the ladies gan cry  
Ne hou that led Was homward E melody  
Ne hou Arcite is brent to asfhen colde  
Ne hou the lyche wakes Were y holde  
That ilke nyght ne how the grekes pley  
The wake pleyes ne hepe I nat to say  
Whiche Wraстelith best naked With oyle anoynt  
Ne who that bare him best at the poynt  
I wil nat telle alle how they goon  
Home to Athenes When the play is doon  
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende  
And make of my long tale an ende

          y pprocess and by length of certayn yeres  
B At stynt is the moornyng and the cheres  
Of grekes by one generalle assent  
Than semeth me thez Was a parlement  
At Athenes vpon a certayn poynthe and caas  
And among the which poyntes spoken Was  
To haue With certayn countrees alpaunce  
And haue fully of Thebans obeysaunce  
For whiche this noble Theseus anon  
Let send after gentyl palamon  
Unwyst of him what Was the cause and why  
But in his blake clothes sorowfully  
He cam at his comaundement an hye  
Tho Theseus sent for E melody  
Whan they were set and hyst Was alle the place  
And Theseus abyden hath a space  
Or any worde cam fro his wise breest  
His eyen set he there as him lyst  
And With a sadde visage he sithed styll  
And after that right thus he sayd his wyll



## The Knyghtes Tale

The first mouer of the cause aboue  
Whan he first made the fayre cheyne of loue  
Grete was the effecte and high was his entent  
Wele wist he why and what therof he ment  
For with that fayre cheyne of loue he bond  
The fyre the eyre the water and the lond  
In certayn bondes that may nat fle  
The same prynce and that mouer quod he  
Hath stablissed in this wretched world adoun  
Certayn daies and duracioun  
To alle that is engendred in this place  
Duer the whiche day they may nat passe  
Al may they yet tho daies abrigge  
Thez nedith nat auctoryte to ligitte  
For it is proued by experience  
But that me lyst to declare my sentence  
Than may wele men by this ordre discerne  
That thylke mouer stable is and eterne  
Wel may men know but it be a fool  
That euery party is derpyed fro his hole  
For nature hath nat take his begynnynge  
Of one part or of a cantel of a thing  
But of a thing that parfyte is and stable  
Descending so tyl it be corrupable  
And therfore for his wise purueaunce  
He hath so wile besette his ordenaunce  
That speses of thinges and progessiouns  
Sholden endure by successiouns  
And nat eterne withoute any lye  
This mayst thou vnderstonde and se at eye  
To the oke that hath so long a noysshing  
Fro the tyme that it first gynueth to spring  
And hath so long lyf as ye may see

yet at the laste wasted is the tre  
 Considreth eke hou the hard stoon  
 Dure our feet on whiche we tradde and goon  
 yet wastith it as it lieth by the wey  
 The brode ryuer somtym weyith drey  
 The grete towne se we wane and wende  
 Than ye se that alle thing hath an ende  
 Of man and woman se we wele also  
 That nedes in one of these termes two  
 This is to sayn in yowthe or elles in age  
 He moot be dede the king as shal a page  
 Som in his bedde som in the depe see  
 Som in the large feld as men nay se  
 Ther helpith naught for alle goon that ilke wey  
 Than may I say alle thing mot nedes depe  
 What maketh this But Jupiter the king  
 That is prince and cause of al thing  
 Conuerting al vnto his propre wille  
 For whiche it is derpyed soth to telle  
 And here agaynes no creature alpye  
 Of no degre auayleth for to stryue  
 Than it is wisdom as thinketh me  
 To make vertue of necessite  
 And take it wele that we may nat escheue  
 And namely that to vs alle is due  
 And who so grutchith ought he doth folp  
 And rebel is to him that al may gre  
 And certaynly a man hath moost honoure  
 To dyen in his moost excellent floure  
 Whan he is spker of his gode name  
 Than hath he do his frende ne him no shame  
 And gladder ought his frende be of his de th  
 Whan with honou so by yolden is his bre th



## The Kyghtes Tale

Than whan his name appalled is for aye  
for alle foryeten is than his basselage  
Than is it best as for a worthy fame  
To dyen whan a man is best of name  
The contrary for alle this is wilfulnes  
Why gruge we why haue we heuynesse  
That gode Arcite of cheualry the flouz  
Departed is with duety and honour  
Dute of the foule pryson of this lyf  
Why gruched his cosyn and his wyf  
Of his welefare that loueth him so wele  
Can he them thanke nay god woot neuiz a dele  
That bothe his soule and eke them offendee  
And yet they may theiſ luster nat amende  
What may I conclude of this long serpy  
But after wo I rede vs be mery  
And thanke Jupiter of alle his grace  
And oz we departen from this place  
I rede that we make es sorowes two  
O parfyte ioy lastyng euermo  
And loketh now where moost sorow is yune  
There wil I first amende and begynne  
Suster quod he this is my ful assent  
With alle the auyse of my parlement  
That gentyl palamon your owyn knyght  
That serueth you with hert and myght  
And euiz hath do sithen ye first him knew  
That ye shal of your grace on him rewe  
And take him for husbond and for lorde  
Pene ne your hond for this is oure accorde  
Let see now of your womanly pyte  
He is a knyghtes brother sonne parde  
And though he were a poure bacheler

## The Knyghtes Tale

Sithen he hath serued you so many a pere  
And hadde for you so grete aduersite  
It must be considred leuyth me  
For gentyl mercy ought to passe right  
Than sayd he thus to palamon the knyght  
I trow thez nedith litel sermounge  
To make you assent to this thing  
Cometh nere and take your lady by the honde  
And thus of them bothe was made the bond  
That hight matromonye or mariage  
By alle the counseyl of the baronage  
And thus with alle blisse and melody  
Hath palamon wedded Emely  
And god that alle this worlde hath wrought  
Sente him his loue that dere hadde bought  
For now is palamon in al wele  
Lpyng in blisse in richesse and in hele  
And Emely him loueth so tenderly  
And he her serneth agayn so gentylly  
That thez was no worde them bitwene  
Of jelousy or of any othez tene  
Thus endith palamon and Emely  
And god saue alle this company

Here endith the knyghtes tale  
And here begynneth the myllers prologue

W Han that the knyght had thus his tale tolde  
In alle the company nas there yong ne olde  
That he ne sayd it was a noble story  
And worthy to be drawe in memory  
And namely the gentylles euerichone  
Dure hoost lough and swore so mot I gone



## The Myllers Prologue

This goth aright ynbokeled is the male  
Let se now who shal tel another tale  
For truly the game is wele begonne  
Now telle ye sir monke if that ye honne  
Somwhat to quyte the knyght his tale  
The Myller that for dronken was al pale  
To that ynnethes spon his horse he sat  
He nolde auale nother hode ne hat  
Ne abyde noman for his curtesy  
But in pylates boyce he gan to cry  
And swore by armes blode and bones  
I can a noble tale for the nones  
With whiche I wol now quyte the knyghtes tale  
Dure hoost saw that he was dronke of ale  
And sayde abyde Robyn leue Brother  
Som better man shal telle first another  
Abyde and let vs werke thyrstely  
By cokkes soule quod he that nyl nat I  
For I wil speke oz elles go my wey  
Dure hoost aunswerd telle on a deuyl wey  
Thou art a fool thy wyt is ouercome  
Now herkeneth quod the Myller alle and some  
But first I make a protestacioun  
That I am dronke I knowe by my soun  
And therfore if I mys speke oz sey  
Wyte it the ale of Suthwerke I you pray  
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf  
Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf  
How that a clerke hath set the wrightes cappe  
The reue aunswerd and sayd stynt thy clappe  
Let be thy lewde dronkyn harlotrye  
It is a synne and eke grete foly  
To appeyre any man oz him defame

And eke bring wyues in suche name  
 Thou mayst ynough of othez thinges sayn  
 This dronken Myllers spake ful sone ageyn  
 And sayd o leue brothez I wolde  
 Who hath no wif he is no cohercolde  
 But I say nat therfore that thou art one  
 There been gode wyues many one  
 Why art thou angry with my tale now  
 I haue a wif parde as wele as thou  
 yet nolde I nat for the oxen in my plow  
 Take vpon me more than ynow  
 As deme of my selue that I were one  
 I wol beleue wele that I am none  
 An husbonde shulde nat be inqursityf  
 Of goddes pryncpte ne of his wif  
 So he may fynde goddes fuson there  
 Of the remenaunt nedith nat to enquire  
 What sholde I more say but this myllere  
 He nolde his wordes for no man forbere  
 But tolde his chorles tale in this manere  
 Me at thinketh that I shal reherse it here  
 And therfore euery gentyl wight I pray  
 Demeth nat for goddes loue that I say  
 Of euylentent but that I must reherce  
 Theiz talcs al be they bettre or werce  
 Or elles falsen som of my mateze  
 And therfore who solystith nat to here  
 Turne ouer the leef and chese a nother tale  
 For he shal fynde ynow both grete and smale  
 Of histoypalre thing that to wcheth gentylm: sse  
 And eke moralite and holynesse  
 Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys  
 The Myllers is a chorle ye know wile this



## The Myllers Prologue

So is the reue and eke other mo  
And harlotrye they tolde bothe t wo  
Auyseth you and put me oute of blame  
And eke men shal nat make earnest of game

Here begynneth the myllers tale



W Bilom thez was duelling in Dvenforde  
A riche gnof that gестes hadde to boorde  
And of his craft was he a carpentre  
With him thez was a poure scoler  
Had lerned art but al his fantespe  
Was turned to lere astrologye  
And coude a certayn of conclusiouns  
To demyn by interzogaciouns  
If that men asked him certeyn houres  
Whether they shuld haue drought or shoures  
Or if that men asked him what shulde befall  
Of euery thing I may nat rehen alle

This clerke was cleped hend nycolas  
 Of derne loue he coude and of solas  
 And thezto he was fry and ful pryue  
 And lyke a mayden meke for to see  
 A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye  
 Alone with oute any company  
 Ful fetoufly y dight with herbes sote  
 And he him selue was swete as is the rote  
 Of lycorpe or of any cete wale  
 His almege st his bokes grete and smale  
 His astrologye longynge for his arte  
 His augrym stones ley fayre a part  
 On shelues couched at his beddes hed  
 His presse y couered with a folding rede  
 And alle aboue thez lay a gay sawtrye  
 On whiche he made anyghtes melodye  
 So swetely that al the chambre rong  
 And Angelus ad virginem he song  
 And after that he song the kynges note  
 Ful often blissed was his mery throte  
 And this swete clerke his tyme spent  
 After his frendes syndyng and his rent  
 This carpentre hadde wedded new a wif  
 Whiche that he loued more than his lyf  
 Of xviii yere she was of age  
 Jelous he was and held hez narrow in cage  
 For she was wylde and yong and he was olde  
 And demed him selue lyke to be a cokewolde  
 He knew nat caton for his wyf was rude  
 That badde a man wed his symylitude  
 Men sholde wedde after thez estate  
 For youth and age been often at debate  
 But sithen he was fallen in the snare



## The Myllers Tale

He must endure as other folke his care  
Fayre was his yong wif and therewithalle  
As any wessel her body gent and smalle  
A seynt she wored barred alle of silke  
A barnecloth as white as morow mylke  
Upon her lendes with fulle many a goze  
White was her smoke and broden alle biforn  
And eke behind on her coler aboute  
Of coleblake sylke within and eke withoute  
The tapettes of her white volupez  
Were of the same sute of the coler  
Her fylet brode of silke and set ful hye  
And sikerly she hadde a likerous eye  
Ful smale y pulled were her browes two  
And they were bent and blake as any sloo  
She was moche more blissful on to se  
Than is the newe pere genet tre  
And softer than is the wolfe of the wede  
And by her gyrdel hangt a purs of lede  
Tarsalet with silke and perled with laton  
In alle this worlde to seke by and down  
There is noman so wise that coude thinke  
So gay a pupelot or so praty a wyche  
Fulle brighter was she shynnyng of her hue  
Than in the toure the noble forged new  
But of her song it was as loude and perny  
As any swallow sittynge in the beryn  
Therto she coude shippe and make game  
As any hydde or calf folowynge his dame  
Her mouth was swete as braggot or meth  
Or horde of apelles leyde on the hay or heth  
Wynsynge she was as is a ioly colt  
Yong as a mast and by right as a host

## The Myllers Tale

A broche she bare vpon her low coler  
As brode as is the boos of a bokeher  
Her shoen were laced on her legges hye  
She was a prymerolle a pytyes nye  
For any lord to liggyn in his bed  
Or yet for any gode yeman to wedde  
Now spre and eft spre so befel the caas  
That on a day this hend Nicholas  
Fyl with this yong wif to rage and to pley  
Whyles that her husbond was at Deney  
As clerkes be ful subtel and ful queynte  
And pryuelly he caught her by the queynte  
And sayd ywys but if I haue my wille  
For deryloue of the lemman I spyl  
And held her hard by the shanke bones  
And sayd lemman loue me alle at ones  
Or I wol dye al so god me saue  
And she sprong as a colt doth in the traue  
And with her hede she wrieth fast a wey  
She sayde I wol nat kysse the by my fay  
Why let be quod she let be Nicholas  
Or I wol cry oute harrow and allas  
Do wey your hondes for your curtesy  
This Nicholas gan mercy for to cry  
And spake so fayre and profered her so fast  
That she her loue graunted him at the last  
And swore her othe by seint Thomas of kent  
That she wolde be at his comaundement  
Whan that she may her leyser wele espye  
My husbond is so ful of ielousye  
That but ye wayte wele and be pryue  
I wote right wele I nam but dede quod she  
ye must be ful dery as in this caas



## The Appellers Tale

May therof care the nat quod Nicholas  
Pytherly a clerke hath besed his while  
But if he coude a Carpenter begyle  
And thns they been accorded and y sworn  
To wayte a tyme as I haue tolde biforn  
Whan Nicholas hadde do thus euerydele  
And thacked her aboute the lends wele  
He kyste her swete and toke his sawtrye  
And pleyed fast and made melodye  
Than fel it thus that to the parisshe chirche  
Cristes own werkes for to wyrche  
This gode wif went on an holy day  
Her forhede shone as bright as ony day  
So was it wasshe whan she leet her werke  
Now was of the chirche a parisshe clerke  
The whiche that was y cleped Absolon  
Crulled was his here and as the gorde it shone  
And struted as a fan large ant brode  
Ful streight and euyr lay his ioly shode  
His rode was rede his eyen gray as goos  
With powles wyndowes coruen in his shoes  
In hoses rede he went fulle fetoufly  
y cladde he was ful smalle and feioufly  
Alle in a hyrtel of a light waget  
Ful fayre and thicke by the poyntes set  
And therupon he hadde a gay surplice  
As white as is the blossom on the ryse  
A mery childe he was so god me saue  
Wele coude he leten blode and clippe and shaue  
And make a charter of lond and a quictaunce  
In t wenty maners coude he trippe and daunce  
After the scole of Wyenford tho  
And with his legges cast to and fro

## The Myllers Tale

And pley songes on a smalle rebyble  
Therto he song somtyme a loude quynnyble  
And as wele coude he pley on his gyttern  
In alle the toun nas brewe house no tauern  
That he ne bisited with his solace  
There as any gayland tapster was  
But soth to sey he was somdele sheweymous  
Of fartyng and of speche daungerous  
This absolon that iolyf was and gay  
Goth with a censoure on the holyday  
Sensyng the wyues of the parysse fast  
And many a louely loke on them he cast  
And namely on this carpenters wyf  
To loke on her him thought a mery lyf  
She was so proppyr swete and eke lytherous  
I dar wele say if she hadde be a mous  
And he a cat he wolde her hent anone  
This parisse clerke this ioly absolon  
Bath in his hert suche a loue longyng  
That of no wif toke he non offring  
For curtesy he sayde he wolde non  
The mone whan it was nyght bright shone  
And absolon his gyttern hadde y take  
For paramours he thought for to wake  
And forth he goth iolyf and amorous  
Tyl he cam to the Carpenters house  
A litel after cockes hadde y crowe  
And dressed him vp by the shot wyndowe  
That was vpon the Carpenters walle  
He singith in his boyce gentyl and smalle  
Now dere lady if thy wyl be  
I pray yow that ye wil thinke on me  
Ful wele accordyng to his gytteryng



This carpenter awoke and herde him sing  
 And spake vnto his wif and sayde anon  
 What alþson herist thou nat absolon  
 That chaunteth thus vndre oure boures walle  
 And she aunswerd her husband therwith alle  
 þes god woot John I here it euerydele  
 This passith forth what wille ye but than wele  
 From day to day this ioly absolon  
 So wolweth her that he is wo begoon  
 He wakith alle the nyght and alle the day  
 He kempt his lockes brode and made them gay  
 He wolweth her by meanes and brocage  
 And swore he wolde be her own page  
 He syngeth broelyng as a nyghtyngale  
 He sent after piment meth and spiced ale  
 And wafres pppynghote of the gleden  
 And for she was of toun he profered mede  
 For som folke wol bye women for richesse  
 And som for strokes and som for iolynesse  
 Som tyme he shewith his lustynes and masterye  
 He pleyeth herodes vpon a scaffolt bye  
 But what auayleth him as in this caas  
 So loued so this hend Nicholas  
 That absolon may blow the buckes horn  
 He ne hadde for his laboure but a scorn  
 And thus she maketh of absolon her ape  
 And al his ernest turneth tyl a jape  
 Ful soth is this prouerbe it is no lye  
 Men say right thus alwey the nyght sleye  
 Maketh the fer leef for to be lothe  
 For though that absolon be wood or wrothe  
 Bicause that he fer was from her sight  
 This nyght Nicholas stode in his light

## The Myllers Tale

Now here the wele thou hende Nicholas  
For absolone may wayle and syng alas  
And so be fel it that on a saturday  
This carpenter was goon tyl D seney  
And eke hend Nicholas and alþson  
Accorded be fully to this conclusioun  
That Nicholas shal shapen hem a wyle  
This sely ielous husbond to begyle  
And if so be the game went a right  
She sholde slepe in his armes alle nyght  
For this was her desire and his also  
And right anone withoute wordes mo  
This nycolas nolengere wolde tary  
But doth fulle soft in to his chambre carye  
Bothe mete and drinke for a day or twey  
And to her husbond badde her for to sey  
If that he asked after Nicholas  
She shold say she ny st where he was  
Of alle that day she saw him nat with eye  
She troweth that he is in som maladye  
For that no crye her mayde coude him calle  
He nolde aunswere for nothing myght falle  
This passith forth alle the saturday  
That nycolas styll in his chambre ley  
And ete and slepe or dyd what him lyst  
Tyl sonday that the sonne goth to rest  
This sely carpenter hath grete meruayle  
Of nycolas or what myght him ayle  
And sayd I am adradde by seynt Thomas  
It stondith nat a right with Nicholas  
God sheld it that he dyed sodenly  
This worlde is now fulle tykel sykerly  
I sawe a corps to day bore to the chirche



That now on monday last I sawe him wirche  
 Go by quod he vnto his kнауe anone  
 Clepe at the dore and knocke with a stone  
 Poke how it is and telle me boldely  
 This kнауe goth by ful sturdely  
 And at the chambre dore while that he stode  
 He cryed and knocked as he were wood  
 What how what do ye master Nicholas  
 How may ye slepen al the long day  
 But alle for naught he herd nat a worde  
 An hool ful low he fond vpon a bord  
 There as the cat was wont in for to crepe  
 And at the hole he lohed in ful depe  
 Tyll at the last he hadde of him a sight  
 This nycolas sat gaping euil by right  
 As he hadde kyked on the new mone  
 Adoun he goth and tolde his master sone  
 In what aray he sawe this ilke man  
 This carpenter to blisse him began  
 And sayd help vs seint frides wyde  
 A man wote lytel what him shal betyde  
 This man is fallen with his astronomy  
 In som woodnesse or in som agonye  
 I thought ay wele how it sholde be  
 Men sholde nat know of goddes pryuyte  
 y blessed be alwey a lewde man  
 That naught but only his beleue can  
 So ferd another clerke with astronomy  
 He walked in the felde for to pryde  
 Vpon the sterres what ther sholde befall  
 Tyll he was in a marlepit y falle  
 He saw nat. But yet by seint Thomas  
 We rewith fore of hend Nicholas

## The Myllers Tale

He shalbe rated of his studipng  
If that I may by iesu heuyn king  
Gete me a staf that I may vnder spore  
While that thou Robyn heuyst of the dore  
He shalle oute of his studipng as I gesse  
And to the chambre dore he gan him dresse  
His knaue was a strong chozle for the nones  
And by the haspe he haf it vp at onys  
In to the floze the dore fel anone  
This nycolas sat ay as styll as stone  
And euiz gaped bp ward in the eyre  
This carpentere wende that he were in dispeyre  
And hent him by the shulders myghtyly  
And shoke him harde and cryed spetously  
What nycolay what how loke a doun  
Awake and thinke on cristes passioun  
I crouche the fro eluys and fro wighthes  
Therwith the nyghtspel sayde he anone righthes  
On foure haluys on the house aboute  
And on the thressholde of the dore withoute  
Jesu crist and seint benedight  
Blysse this house from euery wicked wight  
For nyghtes berry the wight pater noster  
Where wonest thou seynt petrys sustre  
And at the last this hende nycolas  
Gan for to sigh sore and sayde allas  
Shal alle this worlde be loste est sones now  
This carpentez aunswerd what sayest thou  
What thinke on god as we do men that swynke  
This nycolas aunswerd fette me drynke  
And after wil I speke to the in pryuate  
Of certayn thinges that touchen me and the  
I wil it telle none othel man certayn



## The Myllers Tale

This carpentere goth down and cometh atteyn  
And brought of myghty ale a large quarte  
And when eche of them hadde dronke his part  
This nycolas his doze faste shette  
And down the carpenter be him he set  
He sayd John myn hoost leef and dere  
Thou shalt vpon thy trouthe swere me here  
That to no wight thou shalt this counsel wrey  
For it is cristes counseyll that I sey  
And if thou telle it man thou art forloze  
For this vengeance thou shalt haue therfore  
That if thou wrey it man thou shalt be wode  
Nay crist forbede it for his verzy blode  
Quod tho this sely man I am no blabbe  
Ne though I say I am nat leef to gabbe  
Say what thou wilt I shal it neuiz telle  
To childe ne wif be him that harwed helle  
Now John quod nycolas I wil nat lye  
I haue founde it in myn astrologye  
As I haue loked in the mone bright  
That now a monday next a quartyr nyght  
Shal fal a rayn and that so wilde and wode  
That half so grete was neuiz noes flode  
This worlde he sayde in lesse than an houre  
Shal alle be dreynt so hydous is the shoure  
Thus shal mankynd drenche and lese theiir lyf  
This carpentere aunswerd allas my wyf  
And shal she drenche allas my alifoun  
For sorow of this he felle almoost a down  
And sayd is ther no remedy in this caas  
Why yes for god quod he nd Nycolas  
If thou wilt worke after loze and rede  
Thou mayst nat worke after thy own hede

## The Myllers Tale

For thus sayeth Salamon that was ful trewe  
Worke alle by counseyll and thou shalt nat rewe  
And if thou worke wylt by gode counseyll  
I vnder take withouten mast or sayle  
yet shal I haue her and the and me  
Hast thou nat herd hou saued was Noe  
Whan that oure lord hadde warned him biforn  
That al the worlde with water sholde be loyn  
pes quod this carpentere ful yore ago  
Thou hast nat herd quod nycholas also  
The sorow of noe with his felawship  
Or that he myght get his wif to ship  
Him hadde beleue I dar wele vnder take  
At that tyme than alle his wedders blake  
That she had hadde a ship her selue alone  
And therfore wotest thou what is best to done  
This askest hast and of an hasty thing  
Men may nat preche ne make taryng  
Anon go get vs fast into this Iune  
A knedding trough or elles a hymelyn  
For eche of vs but loke that they be large  
In whiche we may swymmen as in a barge  
And haue therin bytaile suffisaunt  
But for one day ty on the remanaunt  
The water shal a flake and go a wey  
Aboute pryme vpon the next day  
But Robyn may nat wylt on this thy knaue  
Ne eke thy mayden gyfte I may nat saue  
Aske nat why for though thou aske me  
I wyl nat telle goddes pryuate  
It suffiseth the but if thy wylt be madde  
To haue as grete a grace as Noe hadde  
Thy wif shal I wele saue oute of doute



## The Wyllers Tale

Go now thy way and spede the here aboute  
But whan thou hast for the and her and me  
ygoten vs thies knedding tubbes thre  
Than shalt thou hong them in the roof ful hye  
That noman of oure purueaunce espye  
And whan thou thus hast done as I haue seyde  
And hast oure bytaye fayre in them yleyde  
Andeke an aye to smyte the corde a two  
Whan that the water cometh that we may go  
And breke an hole an high vpon the gable  
In to the gardeyn ward ouer the stable  
That we may frely passe forth oure way  
Whan that the grete shoure is passed a way  
Than shal we swymme as merely I undertake  
As doth the white doke after the drake  
Than wol I clepe how alison how John  
Be mery for the flode wil passe anone  
And thou wilt sey hayle mayster Nicholas  
Gode morow I se the wele for it is day  
And than shal we be lordes alle oure lyne  
Of alle the worlde as noe and his wif  
But of o thing I warne the fulle right  
Be wele auyfied on that ilke nyght  
Whan we be entred into the shippe bord  
That one of vs ne speke nat a word  
Ne clepe ne cry but be in his praye  
For it is goddes owne best dere  
Thy wif and thou must hang fer a twynne  
For that betwixt you twey shal be no synne  
No more in lohyng than there shal in dede  
This ordenaunce is sayde go god the spede  
Tomorow at nyght when folke be alle a slepe  
Into oure knedding tubbes wyl we crepe

And sittyn there abyding goddes grace  
 Go now thy wey I haue no lenger space  
 To make of this no lenger sermonyng  
 Men say thus send the wise and say no thing  
 Thou art so wise it nedith the nat to tethe  
 God saue our lyf and that I the besече  
 This sely carpentere goth forth his wey  
 Ful ofte he sayd allas and wela wey  
 But to his wif he tolde his pruyte  
 And she was ware and knewe it bet than he  
 What alle this queynt cast was for to sey  
 But nathelesse she ferd as she wolde dey  
 And sayd allas go forth thy wey anone  
 Help us to scape or we be dede echoon  
 I am thy true berry wedded wif  
 Go dere spouse and helpe to saue oure lyf  
 No whiche a gret thing is affectioun  
 Men may dye alday of ymaginacioun  
 So depe may impressioun be take  
 This sely carpentere begynneth quake  
 Him thinketh verily that he may se  
 Noyes flode come walowing as the see  
 To drenchen alisoun his hony dere  
 He wepith waleth and maketh sorp there  
 He syghed with may a sorp swough  
 He goth and getteth him a knedding trough  
 And after that a tub and a hemelyn  
 And pruely he sent them to his Jnne  
 And hange them in the rose in pruyete  
 His own hond he made ledders thre  
 To clymbyn by the renges and the stalkes  
 In to the tubbes hanging in the balles  
 And then vitayleth both trough and tubbe



## The Myllers Tale

With Brede and chese and gode ale in a Bus  
Suffisyng right ynow as for one day  
But or he hadde made alle that araye  
He sent his knave and eke his wenche also  
Upon his erond to london for to go  
And on the monday whan it drew to nyght  
He shytted his dore withoute candel light  
And dressed al thing as it sholde be  
And shortly by the clombyn alle thre  
They sytten styl wele a furlong wey  
Now pater noster cum sayd Nicholay  
And cum sayde John and cum sayd alyson  
This carpentre sayd his deuocioun  
And styll he sittyth and byddith his prayer  
Awaiting on the rayn if he it here  
The dede sleepe for wery besynesse  
Fyl on this Carpenter right as I gesse  
Aboute curfue tyme or lytel more  
For trauayl of his goost he Groneth sore  
And eft he rowtyth for his hede mys lay  
Doun of the leddez stalketh nytholay  
And alison ful soft doun she spedde  
Withoute wordes mo they go to the bedde  
There as the carpenter was wont to lye  
There was the reuel and the melodye  
And thus lieth alison and Nicholas  
In besynesse of myrth and in solas  
Tyl that the belle of laudes gan to ryng  
And freres in the chauncel gan to syng  
This parisshe clerke this amorous Absolon  
That is for loue alwey so wo begon  
Upon the monday was at Dseney  
With company him to disporte and pley

And asked bpon a caas a cloysterez  
 Ful prpuely after Johan the Carpentere  
 And he drew him a parte oute of the chirche  
 And sayde I not I saw him nat wyrche  
 Sithen saturday I trow that he be went  
 For tymber there our abbot hath him sent  
 For he is wont for tymber for to go  
 And duelle at the graunge a day or two  
 Welles he is at his house certeyn  
 Where that he be I can nat sothly sayn  
 This absolon ful ioly was and light  
 And thought now is tyme to wake al nyght  
 For spkerly I saw him nat steriing  
 Aboute his dore sithen day gan to spring  
 So moot I thryue I shalle oz cockes crowe  
 Prpuely knocken at his wyndow  
 That stont ful low bpon his boures wal  
 To Alisoun now wil I tellen alle  
 My loue longiing for yet I shal nat mys  
 That at the leest wey I shal her kyss  
 Som maner comforte shal I haue parfay  
 My mouthe hath itched alle the long day  
 That is a signe of kyssing at the leest  
 Al nyght eke me mette I was at a feest  
 Therfore I wyl go slepe an oure or twey  
 And alle the nyght than wil I walke and pley  
 Whan that the first cocke hath crowe ano  
 Up riseth this ioly louer Absolon  
 And him arrayeth gay at popnt deuyse  
 But first he che with grayn and lycorpe  
 To smellen swete oz he hadde hempt his here  
 Vndre his tong a true loue he bere  
 For therby went he to haue be gracious



## The Myllers Tale

He rometh to the Carpenters house  
And styl he stont vndre the shot wyndow  
Vnto his brest it raught it was so low  
And soft he colwheth with a semysoun  
What do ye honypombe swete alyfoun  
My fayre byrde my suete syna mome  
Awaketh lemman myn and speke tome  
Ful lytel thinke ye vpon my wo  
That for your loue I swete there I go  
No wondre is though I swelt and swete  
I morne as doth a lambe after the tete  
I wys lemman I haue suche loue longing  
That lyke a turtyl true is my moznyng  
I may nat ete no more than a mayde  
Go fro the wyndow iache fool she sayde  
As helpe me god it wol nat be com bame  
I loue a nother and elles I were to blame  
Wele bet than the by Jesu absolone  
Go forth thy wey or I wil throwe a stone  
And let me slepe a twenty deuyl way  
Alas quod absolon and wele a wey  
That true loue was euil so euyl beset  
Than kyss me sithen it may be no bet  
For iesus loue and for the loue of me  
Wylt thou than go thy wey therwith quod she  
ye certis lemman quod this absolon  
Than make the redy quod she I come anone  
And vnto Nicholas she sayde styll  
Now pease and thou shalt laugh thy fylle  
This absolon down set him on his knees  
And sayde I am a lord at alle degrees  
For after this I hope ther cometh more  
Lemman thy grace and swete byrd thy nore

## The Myllers Tale

The Wyndowes she vndoth and that in hast  
Haue do quod she com and spede the fast  
Lest that oure nyghboures the aspye  
This absolon gan wype his mouth fulle dry  
Derhe was the nyght as pyche or cool  
And at the Wyndow she put oute her hole  
And absolon ne felt ne bet ne wers  
But with his mouth he kyssed her ers  
Fulle sauerly or he were ware of this  
A bak he stert and thought it was a mys  
For wele wist he a woman hadde no berd  
He felt a thing alle rough and long hered  
And sayd fy allas what haue I do  
The quod she and clapped the Wyndow to  
And absolon goth forth a soyr paas  
A berd a berd sayde hend Nicholas  
By goddes corpus this goth fayre and wele  
This sely absolon herd euery dele  
And on his lippe he gan for angre byte  
And to him selue he sayde I shal the quyte  
Who rubbyth now who frotyth now his lippes  
With dust with cloth with sond with chippes  
But absolon that sayeth ful ofte allas  
My soule betake I sayde he to sathanas  
But me leuyr and alre this toun quod he  
On this despyte a broken for to be  
Alas quod he allas that I ne hadde blent  
His hote loue was colde and alle queynt  
For fro that tyme that he hadde kyssed her ars  
Of paramours set he nat a carse  
For he was heled of his maladye  
And oft paramours gan he diffye  
And wept as doth a childe that is bete



# The Myllers Tale

A soft paas he went him ouer the strete  
 Vnto a symth men called dane gerueys  
 That in his forge symteth plow harneys  
 He sharpith the share and the cultre beside  
 This absolon knocketh alle easely  
 And sayd vnto geruays and that anon  
 What who art thou. it am I absolon  
 What absolon what cristes swete tre  
 Why ryse ye so rathe. ey benedicite  
 What ayleth you som gay gyrl god it woot  
 Hath brought you thus vpon the verytote  
 By seynt Note ye wote what I mene  
 This absolon rought nat a bene  
 Of alle this pley apen no word he paf  
 He hadde wele more thought on his distaf  
 Than geruays knewe and seyde frend so dere  
 That hote cultre in the chymney here  
 Aslene it me I haue therewith to done  
 I wol bringe it the agayn fulle sone  
 Geruays aunswerd certys were it golde  
 Or in a poke nobles alle vntolde  
 Thou sholdest it haue as I am true symth  
 By cristes fote what wol ye do therewith  
 Therfore quod absolon be as he may  
 I shalle it telle the to morow or day  
 And caught the cultre by the colde stele  
 Fulle softe oute of the doze he gan stele  
 And wente vnto the carpenters walle  
 He coughe first and knocketh therewith alle  
 Vpon the wyndow right as he dyd ere  
 This alpsoun aunswerd who is there  
 That knockith so I warraunt it a theef  
 Why nay quod he god wote my swete leef

I fere I am a Smith & quere. quod it  
 & go to the Synter. & the Synter.

## The Myllers Tale

I am absoloun thyn own derling  
Of golde quod he I haue the brought a ryng  
My moder paue it me so god me saue  
Fulle fyne it is and therto wile y graue  
This wyl I gyue the if thou me kysse  
This Nicholas was ryse for to pisse  
And thought he wolde amende alle the iape  
He sholde kysse his ers or that he scape  
And by the wyndow dyd he hastely  
And oute his ers he putyth pryncely  
Ouer the buttocke of the shanke bone  
And therwith spake this clerke absoloun  
Speke swete byrde I not where thou art  
This Nicholas anone let fle a fart  
As grete as it hadde been a thondre dynt  
That with the stroke he was almoost y blynt  
And he was redy with his iron hote  
And nycolas amyd the ers he smote  
Of goth the shynne an hande brede aboute  
The hote culere brende so his toute  
And for the smert he wend for to dye  
As he were wode for wo he gan to crye  
Help water water help for goddes hert  
This carpentere oute of his slombre stert  
And herd one cry water as he were wode  
And thought allas now cometh the fode  
He set him by withoute wordes mo  
And with his axe he smote the corde a two  
And down goth alle he sonde neyther to selle  
Ne brede ne ale tyl he cam to the selle  
Upon the floze and there as woun he lay  
Up stert hez alyson and nycolare  
And cryed oute harow in the strete



## The Myllers Tale

The nyghboures both smale and grete  
In ronnyng for to galwryn on this man  
That yet as won lay both pale and wan  
For with the falle brost he hath his arme  
But stond he must vnto his owen harme  
For whan he spake he was anone boyn down  
With hende nytholas and alisoun  
They tolde euery man that he was wode  
So he was agast of noes flood  
Through fantaspe and of his banyte  
He hadde bought him knedding tubbes thre  
And hadde them hanged in the roof aboue  
And that he prayed them for goddes loue  
To sitten in the roof par company  
The folke gan laughen at his fante sy  
In to the roof they hyphyn and they gape  
And turned alle his harm to a iape  
For whatso euir this carpenterz aunswerd  
It was for naught noman his reson herd  
With othes grete he was swoze a down  
That he was holde wode in alle the toun  
For euery clerke right anon helde with othez  
They sayd the man was wode my leef brother  
And euery wight gan laugh at his stryf  
Thus swyued was the carpenters wif  
For alle his hepyng and alle his ielousy  
And absoloun hath hyssed her neyther eye  
And nytholas is scalded in the toute  
This tale is done and god saue alle the route

Here endith the Myllers Tale  
And here begynneth the reues prologue

## The Reues Prologue

W    Whan folke hadde laughten at this nyce caas  
     Of absolon and of hende nycolas  
Dyuerse folke diuersely thy sayden  
But for the more part they lough and pleyden  
Ne at this tale I sawe noman him greue  
But if it were only Of walde the Reue  
Bicause he was of carpenters craft  
A lytel Ire ther is in his hert there last  
He gan to grutche and blame it a lyte  
Sy thee quod he ful wele I coude the quyte  
With bleryng of a proude myllers eye  
If that me lyst to speke of rebaudrye  
But I am olde me lyst nat pley for agge  
Gras tyme is done my fodre is now foragge  
This white top writeth my olde peres  
My hert also moulyd is as my here is  
But yet I fare as doth an open ers  
For that ilke frute is euez lengre the wers  
Tyl it be rotyn in mulloke or in stre  
We olde men I drede so faren we  
Tyl we be rotyn can we nat be rype  
We hopen alwey while the worlde wil pype  
For in oure wille ther stekith euiz a nayle  
To haue an hore hede and a grene tayle  
As hath a leeke for though oure myght be gone  
Dure wil desireth folp euiz in one  
For whan we may do naught than wille we speken  
yet in oure assen olde fyre is rekyng  
Foure gledes haue we whiche I shalle deuyse  
Auauntynge lipng angre and couetyse  
These foure sparkles longith vnto elde  
Dure oldelymes may we nat be welde  
But wil ne shal nat fayle that is soth :

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## The Reues Prologue

And yet I haue alwey a coltes tothe  
As many a yere as it was passed henne  
Sithen that my tappe of lyf began to renne  
For spherly whan I was born anone  
Deth drew the tappe of lyf and lete it gone  
And euiz sithen hath so the tappe ronne  
Tyl that almoost al empty is the tonne  
The streame of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe  
The sely tunge may wele ryng and chymbe  
Of wrechidnesse that past is ful poze  
With olde folke saue dotage there is no more  
Whan that oure hoost hadde herd this sermonyng  
Began to speken as lordly as a king  
And sayd what amounteth al this wytte  
What shal we speke at day of holy writte  
The deuyll made a Reue for to preche  
Of a soudre a shipman or a leche  
Say forth thy tale and tary nat the tyme  
So depford and it is half wey to pryme  
So grenewiche that many a shrewe is in  
It were alle tyme thy tale for to begynne  
Now sires quod this **D**s Walde the Reue  
I pray you alle that ye you nat greue  
Though that I auns were and some dyle sette his how  
For lesfulle is with force of shew  
This drunken myller hath tolde vs here  
How that begyled was a carpentere  
Parauenture in scorn for that I am one  
And by your leue I shalle him quyte auone  
Right in his chorles termys wyll I speke  
I pray to god his necke may to breke  
He can wele in myn eye se a stalke  
But in his own eye he can nat se a balke

# The Reues Tale

Here endith the Reues prologue  
And here begynneth his Tale



a    T trompynton nat fer from cambrige  
      There goth a broke and our that a brytte  
Upon the whiche broke ther stonte a mylle  
And this is berry soth that I you telle  
A myller was there duelling many a day  
As any pecoke he was proude and gay  
Pyper he coude and fyssh he and nettys bete  
And turne cuppes and wele wrastyl and shete  
And by his belt he bare along pauad  
And of a swerd fulle trenchant was the blade  
A ioly popper bare he in his pouche  
There was no man for perple durst him touche  
A sheffeld thwetyl bare he in his hose  
Rounde was his face and camosed was his nose  
Also pyllled as an ape was his sculle



He was a market bettre at the fulle  
 Ther durst no wight hand vpon him ledge  
 That he ne swore anone he sholde abedge  
 A theif he was for sothe of corn and mele  
 And that a sligh and vsaunt for to stele  
 His name was y hote depnus Symkyn  
 A wif he hadde y come of noble kynne  
 The parson of the toun her fadre was  
 With her he gaf many a panne of brasse  
 For that Symkyn shulde in his blode alye  
 She was y fostred in a nonrpe  
 For Symkyn wolde no wyf as he sayd  
 But if she were wele y noysshed and a mayde  
 To saue his estate of yemanrpe  
 And she was proude and pert as a pye  
 A fulle fayre sight was vpon them two  
 An holpday bifoze her wolde he go  
 With his tepet ybounde aboute his hede  
 And she cam after in a gytte of rede  
 And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same  
 Ther durst no wight clepe her But dame  
 Was none so hardy that went by the wey  
 That with her durst ones rage or pley  
 But if he wolde be slayn of Symkyn  
 With pauade or with knyf or bodekyn  
 For jelous folke been parlous enir mo  
 Al gates they wolde theyz wyues wenden so  
 And eke also for she was somdele smotyrliche  
 She was as digne as water in a dicke  
 And ful of hocouz and of bismare  
 Her thought a lady sholde her spare  
 What for her kynred and her noztylrye  
 That she hadde lezned in the nonrpe

A doughter hadde they bitwix them two  
 Of twenty yere withoute any moo  
 Saupng a childe that was of half yere age  
 In cradyl it lay and was a proppr pagge  
 This wenche thicke and wele y growe was  
 With camops nose and eyen grey as glas  
 Buttohes brode and brestes rounde and hye  
 But right fayre was her here I wil nat lye  
 The parson of the toun for she was faire  
 In purpos was to make her his heyre  
 Bothe of his catel and of his messuage  
 And straunge he made it of her mariage  
 His purpos was for to bestowe her hye  
 Vnto som worthy blode of auncetry  
 For holy chirche godes must be spende  
 On holy chirche blode that is descended  
 Therfore he wolde his holy blode honoure  
 Though that he holy chirche shulde deuoure  
 Grete sokyn hath this myller oute of doute  
 With whete and malt of alle the lond aboute  
 And namely ther was a grete collige  
 Men clepith it the sokers halke in Cambrige  
 There was theire whete & eke theire malt y ground  
 And on a day it happed in a stounde  
 Seek lay the manciple on a maladye  
 Men wende wisely that he shulde dye  
 Fro whom this myller stak bothe mele and corn  
 An hundred tyme more than he dyd biforn  
 For there bifoze he stak but curtesly  
 But now he was a thief outrageously  
 For whiche the wardeyn chidde and made fare  
 But therof set the myller nat a tare  
 He craked host and swore it was nat so



## The Reues Tale

Than were there yong scolers two  
That duelden in this halle of whiche I sey  
Testyf they were and lusty for to pley  
And only for their myrth and reualrye  
Upon the warden besily they cry  
To geue them leue but a lytel stounde  
To go to the mylle and se their corne y grounde  
And hardely they durst ley their necke  
The myller sholde nat stele half a peche  
Of corn by slepyght ne by force them geue  
And at the last the wardyn gaue them leue  
John hyght that one and alyen hyght that othe  
Of a town were they born that hyght strodre  
Fier in the north I can nat telle where  
This alyen makith redy alle his gere  
And on an horse the sakes he cast anone  
Forth goth alyen the clerke and eke John  
With gode swerde and bokez by his syde  
John knewe the wey him nedith no gyde  
And at the mylle the sakes adoun he leyeth  
Alyen spake first al hayle symond in feyth  
How farys thy fayre doughter and thy wyf  
Alyen welcom quod Symkyn by my lyf  
And John also hou now what do ye here  
Symond quod John nede hath no pere  
Him must nedes serue him selue that hath no wayn  
Or elles he is a sole as clerks syn  
Dure manciple I hope he wille be dede  
So workith ay there wantys in his hede  
And therfore I am come and this alyen  
To grynde oure corn and cary it home alyen  
I pray you spede vs hens in that ye may  
It shalbe do quod Symkyn by my far

What wil ye do whiles it is in honde  
 By god right by the hopper wille I stonde  
 Quod John and se hou the corn goth in  
 yet sa w I neuiz by my fader kyn  
 How the hopper waggis to and fro  
 Alcy n answerd John wilt thou so  
 Than wil I be byneth by my crow  
 And se hou the mele fallith down  
 In to the trough shalbe my disporze  
 For John in feyth I may be of yourz sorte  
 I am as euyl a myller as been ye  
 This myller smyled of thei n pte  
 And thought alle this is done but for a wyle  
 They wene that noman may them begyle  
 But by my thrift yet shalke I blere thei eye  
 For alle thei slyght and thei re philosophy  
 The more queynt crakes that they make  
 The more shalke I stole whan I take  
 In stede of floure yet wil I gyue them bren  
 The gretest clerkes be nat the wise men  
 As whilom to the wolf thus spake the mare  
 Of alle thei re art ne count I nat a tare  
 Dute of the doze he goth fulle pryuyly  
 Whan that he sawe his tyme sofly  
 He lukith vp and down tyl he hath founde  
 These clerkes horse where he stode y bounde  
 Behinde the mylle vndre a leef selle  
 And to the horse he goth faire and wel  
 He stripith of the brydel right anone  
 And whan the horse was loos he gan to gone  
 Toward the fenne where wilde marys renne  
 Forth with wehy through thicke and thynne  
 This myller goth aye n no worde he sayde



## The Reues Tale

But doth his note and With the clerkes played  
Tyl that theire corn was faire and wele grounde  
And whan the mele is sacked and y bounde  
This John goth forth and fynt his horse a wey  
And gan to crye harow and wele a wey  
Dure horse is loost aleyn by cockes bones  
Step on thy feet come of man alle at ones  
Allas oure wardeyn hath his palfrey lorne  
This aleyn al forgat both mele and corn  
Alle was oute of mynde his husbondrye  
What whiche wey is he gone he gan crye  
The wif come rennyng in warde at a renne  
She sayd allas your horse goth to fenne  
With wilde marys as fast as he may go  
On thanke come on his honde that bonde him so  
And he that better sholde haue knytte the reyne  
Allas quod John allas for cristes peyne  
Ley down thy swerde and I wille myn also  
I am fulle swyfte god wote as is a roo  
By cockes soule he shal nat a scape vs bathe  
Why ne hadde thou put the caple in the lath  
Ile hayle be god aleyn thou art a fonne  
These sely clerkes haue wele fast y ronne  
Toward the fenne both aleyn and eke John  
And whan the myller saw they were agoon  
He half a busschel of theire floure hath take  
And badde his wif go knedde it in a cake  
He sayde I trowe the clerkes were a ferde  
yet can a myller make a clerkes berd  
For alle thei art yet let them go thire wey  
So where they goon so lette the children pley  
They gette him naught so lightly by my croun  
These sely clerkes rennyng bp and down

With kepe kepe stond stonde Jossa iossa Ware derere  
 Go whystyle thou there and I shalle kepe him here  
 But shortly tyl it was verely nyght  
 They coude nat though they dyd alle theire myght  
 They 2 cappl cache they ran alwey so fast  
 Tyl in a dicke they caught him at the last  
 Wery and weet as best is in the rayn  
 Comyth John the clerke and with him aleyne  
 Allas quod John the day that I was born  
 Now are we dryuen tyl hethyn and tyl scorn  
 Dure corn is stole men wille vs foules calle  
 Both the wardeyn and our felowes alle  
 And namely the myller wel a wey  
 Thus pleyneyth John as he goth by the way  
 Toward the mylle and bayerd in his honde  
 The myllerz spttynge by the fyre he fonde  
 For it was nyght and ferther myght they naught  
 But for the loue of god they him besought  
 Of herborough and of ease as for theire peny  
 The myllerz sayde aye if ther be any  
 Suche as it is yet shalle ye haue poure part  
 My house is stretyt but ye haue lernyd art  
 Ye can by argumentes maken a place  
 A myle brode of twenty foot of space  
 Let se now if this place wol suffise  
 Or make it romer with speche as is poure gyse  
 Now symond sayd this John by seint cutlerd  
 Ay art thou mery and that is wele aunswerd  
 I haue herd say men shal take of two thinges  
 Suche as he fyndes or suche as he bringes  
 But specially I pray the hoost so dere  
 Gette vs som mete and drinke and make vs chere  
 And we wol pay truly at the fulle



## The Reue Tale

With empty bondes men may nat ha wkes fulle  
So here my syluez redy for to spende  
This Myller to the toun his doughter sende  
For ale and brede and rosted them a goos  
And bond theire horse he sholde no more go loos  
And in his owyn chambre he made a bedde  
With shetys and with chalons faire y spreadde  
Nat from his owyn bedde ten fote or twelue  
His doughter hadde a bedde al by her selue  
Right in the same chambre by and by  
It myght be no bet and cause why  
Ther was no romer herborow in the place  
They soupen and speken them of solace  
And dronken euir strong ale at the beste  
Aboute mydnyght went they to reste  
Wele hath this Myller bernysshed his hede  
Fulle pale he was for dronke and nat rede  
He peyith and he speyith through the nose  
As he were in the quache or in the pose  
To bedde he goth and with him goth his wif  
As any day was she light and iolyf  
So was her ioly whystyl wele y wette  
The cradyl at her beddes feet was sette  
To rocken and to yeue the childe souke  
And whan that dawhyn was in the crowke  
To bedde went the doughter right anone  
To bedde went aleyne and also John  
There nas no more thez nedith them no dwale  
This Myller hath so wysely bybbed ale  
That as an horse he snorteth and sleepe  
Ne of his tayle behinde he tooke no kepe  
His wif bare him a burdon fulle strong  
Men myght here routyng therin a furlong

The wenche rowted eke par company  
 Aleyn the clerke that hard this melody  
 He poked John and sayde slepest thou  
 Hardyst thou euir suche a song or now  
 So whiche a coplyng is at bene them alle  
 A wylde fyre vpon thei2 bodies falle  
 Who herde euir suche a farly thyng  
 ye they shal haue the floure of alle euyl endyng  
 This long nyght the2 tyd me no rest  
 But yet no force alle shalbe for the best  
 For John sayde aleyn so mot I thryue  
 If that I may pon wyncche wyl I swyue  
 Some easement hath la we shapen vs  
 For John ther is a la we that sepyth thus  
 That if a man in one thing be aggrieved  
 That in a nother he shalbe releuyd  
 Dure corn is stole sothly it is no nay  
 And we haue hadde an euyl fyr to day  
 And sithen I shal haue non amendement  
 Agayns my losse I wylle haue easement  
 By coches soule it shal none othe2 be  
 This John aunswerd aleyn auyse the  
 This mytler is a parlous man he sayde  
 And if that he oute of his slepe abrayde  
 He myght do vs bothe a bylony  
 Aleyn aunswerd I count him naught a fly  
 And by he roose and by the wenche he crept  
 This wenche lay by right and fast slept  
 Tyl he so nyght was or she myght aspy  
 That it hadde be to late for to crye  
 And shortly for to telle they were at one  
 Now pley aleyn for I wyl speke of John  
 This John lieth styll a furlong wey or two

*Aloute l. m. 1. 2.*



## The Reue Tale

And to him selue he made reuthe and wo  
Allas quod he this is a Wicked iape  
Now may I say that I am but an ape  
yet hath my felaue som what for his harme  
He hath the Myllers doughter in his arme  
He antred him and hath his nedys spedde  
And I ly as a draf sake in my bedde  
And whan this iape is tolde a nother day  
I shalbe holde a daffe a cokney  
I wyl aryse and auntre it by my fayth  
Unhardy is vnself thus men seyth  
And by he roos and softly he went  
Vnto the cradyl and in his arm it hent  
And bare it soft vnto his beddes fete  
Sone afty2 the wif her routyng leet  
And gan awake and went her oute to pyss  
And cam ageyn and gan her cradel mysse  
And groped here and there but she fonde none  
Allas quod she I hadde almoost mys gone  
I hadde almoost goon to the clerkes bedde  
By benedicite than hadde I foule spedde  
And forth she went tyl she the cradyl fond  
She gropith alwey forther with her hond  
And fonde the bedde and thought but gode  
Bycause that the cradyl by it stode  
And nyist where she was for it was derke  
And fayre and wele she crept vnto the clerke  
And lieth ful styll and wold haue caught a slepe  
Within a while this John by leep  
And on this gode wif he lepyeth on soze  
So mery a fytte ne hadde she pore  
He pryched hard and soze as he were madde  
This ioly lyf haue thies two clerkes ladde

Tyl that the thridde corke began to syng  
 Aleyn went wery in the dawnyng  
 For he had swynken alle the long nyght  
 And sayd fare wele malyn swete wight  
 The day is com I may no lenger byde  
 yet enir more where so I go or ryde  
 I am thyn owne clerke so haue I hee  
 Now dere lemman quod she go fare wele  
 But or thou go o thing I wyl the telle  
 When that thou Wendest hom ward by the mylle  
 Right at the entre of the dore behynde  
 Thou shalt a cake of half a busshele synde  
 That was made of thyn owne mele  
 Whiche that I holped my syre for to stele  
 And gode lemman god the saue and kepe  
 And with that worde almoost she gan to wepe  
 Aleyn bprist and thought or that it daw  
 I wille go crepe in by my felawe  
 And fond the cradyl with his hond anone  
 Be god thought he alle wrong haue I gone  
 My hede is toty of my swynke to nyght  
 That makith me that I go nat a right  
 I wote wele by the cradyl I haue mysgoo  
 Here lieth the Myller and his wif also  
 And forth he goth a twenty deuyl way  
 In to the bed there the Myller ley  
 He Wend haue copen in by his felaw John  
 And by the myller in he crept anone  
 And caught him by the necke and soft spake  
 He sayde thou John thou swyneshede a wake  
 For cristes soule and here a noble game  
 For by that lord that called is seynt Jame  
 As I haue thries in this shorte nyght



Swayned the myllers doughter bolt by right  
 Whiles thou hast as a colwarde be agast  
 ye false harlot quod the myller hast  
 A fals traytoure fals clerke quod he  
 Thou shalt be dede by goddes dignyte  
 Who durst be so bolde to disperage  
 My doughter that is of suche lynage  
 And by the throte bolle he caught aleyn  
 And he hent him dispitously agayn  
 And on the nose he smote him with his fyst  
 Down ran the bloody streme by on his brest  
 And in the floze with nose and mouth to broke  
 They walowed as pigges doon in the poke  
 And by they gone and down agayne anone  
 Tyl that the myller spozned at a stone  
 And down he felle bak ward on his wif  
 That wist no thing of this nyce stryf  
 For she was falle a sleep a lytel wight  
 With John the clerke that wached had al nyght  
 And with the falle oute of her slepe the brayde  
 Help holy croce of brome home she sayde  
 In manus tuas to the lord I calle  
 Awake symond the fende is on me falle  
 My hert is broken help I am but dede  
 There lieth one on my wombe and on my hede  
 Help Symhyn for the fals clerkes fight  
 This John stert by as fast as he myght  
 And groped by the wallis to and fro  
 To fynde a staf and she stert by also  
 And knewe the esters bet than dyd this John  
 And by the walle a staf she toke anone  
 And sawe a lytel shymeryng of a light  
 For at an hole in shone the mone bright

And by that light she saue them bothe two  
 But spherly she nyxt who was who  
 And as she saw a white thing in her eye  
 And whan she can this white thing aspye  
 She wende the clerke hadde wered a bolupere  
 And with the staf she drewe ay nere and nere  
 And haue hyt this aleyn at the fulle  
 And smote the myller on the pylde scul  
 And down he goth and cryed hazow I dye  
 The clerkes bete him wele and leet him lye  
 And dressed them and toke their horse anone  
 And eke their mele and on their wey they gone  
 And at the mylle doze ytt they toke their cake  
 Of half a bussel stoure wele y bake  
 Thus is the proude myller wele y bete  
 And hath y lost the gryndyng of the whete  
 And payed for the souper euerydele  
 Of aleyn and of John that bete him wele  
 His wif is swyued and his doughter als  
 So suche it is a myller to be fals  
 And therto this prouerbe is sayde fulle soth  
 Him dare nat wene wele that euyl doth  
 A gyfouz shalle him selue begyled be  
 And god that sytteth high in mageste  
 Saue al this company grete and smale  
 Thus haue I quyte the myller in my tale

Here endyth the Reues tale

And here begynneth the Toke's prologue

t He Tooke of London while the reue spake  
 For ioye he thought he clawed him on the bake



A ha quod he for cristes own passion  
 This myllere hath a sharp conclusioun  
 Upon his argument of herbegatte  
 Wele soth sayde Salamon in his langage  
 Ne bringe nat euery man in thy house  
 For herbouryng by nyght is parlous  
 Wele ough t a man auy sed for to be  
 Whom that he bring into his pryuyte  
 I pray to god to geue me sorow and care  
 If euir sithen I hight hodge of ware  
 Herd I myllere bet y set a werke  
 He hadde a iape of malice in the derke  
 But goddes forbode that we styn tyn here  
 And therfore if ye wouchsauf to here  
 A tale of me that am a poure man  
 I wol you telle as wele as I can  
 A lytel iape that felle in oure cyte  
 Dure hoost aunsward and sayde I graunt it the  
 Now telle on Roger loke that it be gode  
 For many a pasty hast thou let blode  
 And many a iache of douyr hast thou solde  
 That hadde been twyes hote and twyes colde  
 Of many a pylgrame hast thou cristes curse  
 For of thy persely yet fare they the wers  
 That they haue eten with the stubbed goos  
 For in thy shoppe is many a fye loos  
 Nowe telle on gentyl Roger be thy name  
 But I pray the be nat wrothe for game  
 A man may say fulle sothe in game and play  
 Thou sayst soth quod Roger by my fay  
 But soth pley quade pley as the flemynge sayth  
 And therfore harry bally by thy sayth  
 Be thou nat wroth or we departen here

## The Tokes Tale

Though that my tale be of an hostyllere  
But neuirthelesse I wyl nat telle it yet  
But or we departe I wis thou shalt be quytte  
And ther withalle he lough and made chere  
And seyde his tale as ye shal after here

Here endith the Tokes prologue  
And begynneth his Tale



a Prentyes whilom duelt in oure cyte  
Of craft of bytallers was he  
As gayland he was as golde fynche in the shawe  
Broun as a bery a propre short fela we  
With lockes y kempt ful fetoufly  
Daunce he coude wele and iolyly  
Than he was cleped parkyn reueloure  
He was as fulle of loue and paramoure  
As in the hyue fulle of hony swete



Wele was the wenche that with him myght slepe  
And at euery brydale wolde he synge and hoppe  
And loued bettyr the nethir ende than the shoppe  
For when ther any rydynge was in chepe  
Dute of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe  
Tyl that he hadde alle the sight yseyn  
And daunsed wele he wolde nat come aye  
And gadred him a menye of his sorte  
To hoppe and synge and make suche disporte  
And there they set steuene for to mete  
To pleyen at the dysse in suche a strete  
For in the toun was there no prentysse  
That sayez coude cast a peyre of dysse  
Than Daryn coude and therto he was fre  
Of his dispence in place of pryuate  
That fonde his maystere wele in his chaffare  
For oostyme he fonde his box ful bare  
For shortly a prentys that is a reueloure  
That hauntith dysse riotte and paramoure  
His mayster shalke it in his shoppe aby  
Al haue he no parte of the mynstralsye  
For thift and riotte they been conuertible  
Al can he pley on getern or rebyle  
Reuel and trouthe as in a low degree  
They be fulle wrothe alday as men may se  
This ioly prentys with his maystere stode  
Tyl he was nygh oute of his prentysshode  
Al were he snybbed bothe arely and late  
And sumtyme ledde with reuel to Newgate  
But at the last his mayster him bethought  
Whan on a day whan he his payez sought  
Upon a prouerbe that sayeth this same worde  
Wele bet is rottyn apul oute of horde

## The Tokes Tale

Than that he roten alle the the remanaunt  
So farith it by a riottous seruaunt  
It is ful lasse harme to let him passe  
Than he sholde alle the seruauntes in the place  
Therfore his mayster gaue him a quyttaunce  
And bad him go with sorowe and myschaunce  
And thus this ioly prentyce hadde his leue  
Now let him riotte alle the nyght or leue  
And there is no thief withouten a sorwe  
That helpith him to waste and to sorwe  
Of that he brybe can or borow may  
Anone he sent his bedde and his arraye  
Vnto a compere of his owne sorte  
That loueth dyce ryotte and disporte  
And hadde a wyf that helde for contenaunce  
A shoppe and swyued for her sustenaunce

Here endith the Tokes Tale  
And begynneth the man of lawes prologue

O Dre hoost sa we wele that by the bright sonne  
The azke of his artificialle day is ronne  
The fourthe part and half an oure and more  
And though he were nat depest stert in fore  
He wist wele it was the xviii day  
Of aprylle that is messangere to may  
And sa we wele that the shadowe of euery tre  
Was as in length of the same quantyte  
That was the body erecte that caused it  
And therfore by the shadowe he toke his witte  
That phebus whiche that shone so clere and bright  
Degrees was ybclomben on hight  
And for that day as in latitude



## The Man of lawes prologue

It was ten of the clokke he gan conclude  
And sodenly he plight his horse aboute  
Lordinges quod he I warne you alle the route  
The fourth part of this day is gone  
Now for the loue of god and seint John  
Lese no tyme as ferforth as ye may  
Lordinges the tyme wastith bothe nyght and day  
And stekith fro vs what pryuely slepyng  
And what thurgh negligence in oure walking  
As doth the streme that turneth neuiz agayn  
Descending fro the monteyn into the playn  
Wele can senequye and many a philosopher  
Be waylen tyme more than gorde in cofre  
For losse of catel may recovered be  
But losse of tyme shendyth vs quod he  
It wil nat come apen withouten drede  
Nomore than wil malkyns madynhede  
Whan that she hath in her wauntoneffe  
Let vs nat mowlyn thus in ydelnesse  
f pre man of law quod he so haue ye blisse  
Tel vs a tale anone as for ward is  
ye be submytted thurgh youre fre assent  
To stond in this case to my iugement  
Acquyte you now of youre behest  
Than haue ye do youre deuoure at the leest  
Hoost quod he depardieu ie assent  
To breke for ward it is nat myn entent  
Behest is dette and I wolde holde sayn  
Alie my behest I can no better sayn  
For suche lawe as man geuyth an othez wight  
He shulde him selue vse it by right  
Thus wol oure text but neuir the leste certayne  
I can right now no thristy tale seyn

## The Man of lawes prologue

Than Chaucer though he can but lewdey  
On metres or on rymyng craftely  
Hath sayd them in suche englysshe as he can  
Of olde tymes as knowith many a man  
And if he ne hath nat sayde them leue Brother  
In one boke he hath sayde them in one othe  
For he hath tolde of louers by and down  
Mo than Dyd made of mencioin  
In his epistelles that been fulle olde  
What shorde I telle them sithen they be tolde  
In youthe he made of Ceyns of alcion  
And sith he hath spoken of euerichon  
These noble wyues and thies noble louers eke  
Who so that wol his large volume seke  
Clepyd the sayntes lyues of cupyde  
There may he se the large woundes wyde  
Of Lucrese and of Babylone tyssby  
The swerde of dydo for the fals Ene  
The tre of philles for her demophon  
The playnte of dyanere and of hermeon  
Of adryane and eke of ysiphile  
The barzenn ple stondyng in the see  
The dreynt liandre for her erzo  
The terys of Elyne and eke the wo  
Of Briseyde and of Lacedomea  
The cruelte of the quene medea  
The lytel children hanging by the halse  
For thy Jason that was of loue so false  
Pyrrmystra penelope and alceste  
poure Wisshode comendyng with the best  
But certaynly no worde writhe he  
Of that wicked ensample of Canace  
That loued her owne Brother synfully



## The man of lawes prologue

Of whiche cursed stories I say fy  
Of elles of Tirus appolonius  
How that the cursed king Antiochus  
Beraft his doughter of her madynhede  
That is so horrible a tale for to rede  
Whan he her thre w bpon the pauement  
And therfore he fulle of auysement  
Wolde neuir write in none of his sermons  
Of suche vnkinde abhomynacions  
Ne I wil nat reherse if that I may  
But of my tale what shude I doo this day  
We were fulle lothe be lykened doutles  
To myses that men clepe pperides  
Methamorphoseos wote what I mene  
But neuirthelesse I reck nat a bene  
Though I com after him with haue we bake  
I speke in prose and let him rymes make  
And with that worde he with a sobre chere  
Began his tale as ye shalle after here

Here endith the man of lawes prologe  
And here begynneth his tale



## The man of lawes Tale

o Hatefulle harme condicton of pouert  
With thrist colde and hungere sore confounded  
To ashen helpe the shameth in thyn hert  
If thou none aske With nede art thou wounded  
That berry nede vnwrappith al thy woundes hid  
Maggre thyn hede thou must for indigence  
Or stele or begge or borowe thyn dispence

Thou blampst crist and sayest fulle bitterly  
He mysdeparteth riches temporalle  
Thy nyghboure thou witeest sinfully  
And sayest thou hast to lyte and he hath alle  
Parfay sayest thou somtyme he rekyn shalke  
Whan that his tayle shal Brenne in the gleden  
For he nat helpith the nedefulle in their nede

Herke what is the sentence of the wise  
Bet is to dopen than to haue indigence  
Thy selue nyghbour wol the despyse  
If thou be poure fare wele thy reuerence  
yet of the wiseman take this sentence  
That alle the daies of poure men been wiche  
Be ware therof or thou com to the pryke

If thou be poure thy broder hatyth the  
And alle thy frendes fle fro the allas  
O riche marchauntes full of wele ye be  
O noble o prudent folke as in this caas  
your bagges be nat fylled With ambes aas  
But with synne synke that rennyth in your chaunce  
At cristemasse mery may ye daunce

ye sekyn lond and see for your wynnynge  
And as wise folke ye knowe alle the state  
Of reignes. ye been faders of tydinges  
And tales bothe of pease and of debate  
I were ryght now of a tale desolate



## The man of lawes Tale

Nere that a marchaunte gone is many a yere  
He taught a tale the whiche that ye shalle here

i In surry whilom dwelt a company

Of chapmen riche and therto sadde and trewe  
That wyde were senten theire spycery  
Clothes of golde and satyn riche of helwe  
Theire chaffare was so trusty and so newe  
That euery wight hath deynte to chaffare  
With them and eke to sellen them theire ware

Now fel it that the mapsters of the sorte  
Haue shapen them to Rome for to wende  
Were it for chapmanhede or for disporte  
None other message wolde they thider send  
But cam theire selue to Rome this is the ende  
And in suche place as thought them auantage  
For theire entent they taken theire herbyttage

Soiojned haue thise marchauntes in that toun  
A certayn tyme as fyl for theire plesaunce  
But so bifyl that the excellent renoun  
Of the Emperours doughter dame constance  
Reported was with euery circumstaunce  
Vnto thies surziens marchauntes in suche wise  
Fro day to day as I shalle you deuise

This was the comen boyce of euery man  
Dure Emperoure of Rome god him se  
A doughter hath that sith the worlde began  
To reken as wele her goodnesse as her beautye  
Was neuir suche a nother as was she  
I pray to god in honoure her susteyne  
And wolde she were of alle europe the quene

In her is high beaute withoute pryde  
Youthe withoute gref or folwe  
To alle her werkes vertue is her gyde

## The man of la Wess Tale

Bumblenesse hath slayne in her al tyrannye  
She is a myrroure of alle curtesye  
Her hert is herzy chambre of holynesse  
Her hond mynyster of freedom for almesse  
And alle this boys is soth as god is trewe  
But now to purpos let be turne agayn  
Thise marchantes haue do fraught thez shippes new  
And whan they haue the blisful mady seyn  
Home to surry been they went agayn  
And done theire nedes as they haue do pore  
And lyuen in wele I can say nomore

Now fylit that these marchauntes stode in grace  
Of him that was the sowden of surrye  
For whan that they cam fro any straunge place  
He wolde him selue of his benygne curtesye  
Make them gode chere and besyly aspye  
Tydinges of sondry realmes for to here  
The wondres that they myght se or here  
Amonge othez thinges specialy

The marchauntes haue tolde of dame Custaunce  
So grete noblenesse in earnest seriously  
That this sowdan hath caught so grete plesaunce  
To haue her figure in his remembraunce  
That alle his lust and alle his besy cure  
Was for to loue her whils that his lyf may dure

Parauenture in that large boke  
Whiche men clepe the heuyny writte was  
With sterres or that he his birth toke  
That he for loue shulde haue his dethe alas  
For in the sterres clerez than is the glas  
As writen god wote who so coude it rede  
The deth of euery man withouten drede  
In sterres many a wynter there biforn



## The man of lawes Tale

Was write the deth of hector and achilles  
Of pompey Iulys or they were born  
The stryf of Thebes and of hercules  
Of Sampson Turnus and socrates  
The deth. But mennys wyttes be so dulle  
That no wight can rede it at the fulle

This sowdan for his pryue counseyl sent  
And shortly on this matere for to passe  
He hath to them declared his entent  
And sayd them certeyn But he myght haue grace  
To haue Custaunce within a lytel space  
He nas but dede and charged them on hye  
To shape for him som remedy

Dyuerse men dyuerse thinges sayden  
They argumentes casten by and down  
Many a subtel reson forth they layden  
They spake of magyke and abusoun  
And fynally as in that conclusioun  
They can nat se in that none awauntage  
Ne by none othez wey saue in mariage

Than sawe they there in suche difficulte  
By way of reson to speke alle playn  
Bicause that ther was suche dyuersite  
Bitwixt theire both lawes that they sayn  
They trowe that no cristen prynce wolde fayne  
Wedden his childe vndre oure lawes swete  
That vs was taught by mahound the prophete

And he aunswered them rather than I lese  
Custaunce I wil be cristened doutles  
I moot be herys I may none other chese  
I pray you holde poure argumentes in pease  
Saueth my lyf and be nat rechelesse  
To getyn her that hath my lyf in cure

For in this woo I may nat long endure

What nedith grete dylatacioun

I say by trefse and embassetrye

And by the popes mediacioun

And alle the chirche and alle the cheualrye

That in distrnctioun of maumentrye

And in encreffe of cristes lawe dere

They been accorded so as ye shalle here

Now that the sowden and his baronage

And alle his lieges shulde cristened be

And he shal haue Custaunce in mariatge

And certayn golde I not what quantite

And therto founde they sufficient surete

The same accorde was sworn in either syde

Now faire custaunce almyghty god the gyde

Now wolde som men wene as I gesse

That I sholde telle alle the purueaunce

That the Emperour of his grete noblenesse

Bath shapen for his doughtere dame custaunce

Wele may men know that so grete ordenaunce

May noman telle in a lytel clause

As was arayed for so high a cause

Bisshoppes been shapen with her for to wende

For desladies knyghtes of grete renoun

And othez folke ynough this is the ende

And notyfied is oute thowgh the toun

That euery wight with grete deuocioun

Sholde praye crist that he this mariatge

Resceyue in grete and spede this viatge

The day is com of her departyng

I say the wofulle day fatalle is come

That there may be no lenger taryng

But for ward they dresse them alle and som



## The man of lawes Tale

Custaunce that was with sorow alle ouircom  
fulle pale ariseth and dressith her to wende  
for wele she wote there is none other ende

Alas what wondre it is though she wept  
that shal be sent to straunge nacioun  
fro frendes that her so tenderly kept  
and to be bounde vndre subiectioun  
Of one she knowith nat the condicioun  
husbondes been alle gode and haue be pore  
that knowe wyues I dar say nomore

Madre she sayde thy wretched childe custaunce  
thy yong doughter fostred vp so soft  
and ye my modre my souerayn pleasaunce  
Duez alle thing oute take crist on losse  
Custaunce poure childe her recomaundeth ofte  
vnto your grace for I shalle to Surrye  
Ne shalle I neuir see you more with eye

Alas vnto the Barbaryke nacioun  
I must anone sithen that it is poure wille  
But crist that dyed oure redempcion  
So geue me grace his hestys to fulfille  
I wretched woman no force though I spyll  
women are boyn to thraldom and penaunce  
and to be vndre mannys gouernaunce

I trowe at troye whan turnus brake the walle  
Of Ilion nor brent was Thebes the cyte  
Ne at Rome for the harme through Banyballe  
that Romayns hadde benquysshed tymes thre  
Nas herd suche tendre wepyng for pyte  
as was the chambre for her departyng  
But forth she mot whether she wepe or synge

Of first mouyng cruel firmaruent  
with thy dyurnalle swergh that crowdest alle

And hurtliste al fro E st to occident  
 That naturally wolde holde another wey  
 Thy croudyng set the heuyn in suche array  
 At the begynnyng of this fiers biage  
 That cruel mars hath slayn this mariage

O infortunat ascendaunt tortuous  
 Of whiche the lord is helples falle alas  
 Oute of his angle into the thridde house  
 O mars occitasez as in this caas  
 O feble mone vnhappy be thy paas  
 Thou knettyst the there thou art nat rescyued  
 There thou were wele fro thens art thou wepyd

Imprudent Emperouze of Rome alas  
 Was there no philosophre in thy toun  
 Is no tyme bettre than a nother in this caas  
 Of biages is there none electioun  
 Namely to folke of high condicioun  
 Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y knowe  
 Alas we been to lewde and elles to slow

To shippe is brought this woful fayre mayde  
 Solempnely with euery circumstaunce  
 Now Jesu crist be with you alle she sayde  
 There is no more but fare wele fayre custaunce  
 She peyneth her self to make gode contenaunce  
 And forth I let her sayle in this manere  
 And turne ayeu I wille to my matere

The moder of the solddan Welle of Bices  
 Aspyed hath her sonnys playn entent  
 Howe he wolde lete his olde sacrifices  
 And right anone she for her counseyll sent  
 And they cam to knowe what she ment  
 And whan assembled was this folke in fere  
 She sette her down and sayd as ye shalle here



## The Man of Lawes' Tale

Lordinges quod she pe knowe wele enerichone  
How that my sonne is in poynte for to lete  
The holy lawes of oure alcazon  
yeuen by goddes messangere machomete  
But on a bowe to the grete god I hete  
The lyf shalle rather oute of my body stert  
Or machometes lawe go oute of my hert

What shuld vs tyden of this newe lawe  
But thraldom to oure body and penaunce  
And after ward in helle to be draue  
For we renewed mahoun oure creaunce  
But lordes wil pe make assuraunce  
As I shal say assentynge to my loze  
And I shalle make vs sauf for euirmore

They sworn and assentyde euery man  
To lye with her and dye and by her stonde  
And eueryche in the best wise that he can  
To strengith her shal his frendes fonde  
As she that hath this empryse take on honde  
Whiche pe shal here as I shal deuyse  
And to them alle she spake in this wise

We shal first fayne cristendome to take  
Colde water ne shal vs greue but a lyte  
And I shal suche a fest and a reuel mah  
That as I trowe I shal the sowdan quyte  
For though his wif be cristened new so white  
She shal haue nede to washe away the rede  
Though she a fonte fulle of water with her lede

¶ Sowdannes rote of iniquite  
Virago thou samarian the seconde  
¶ serpent vndre femynnyte  
p lyke vnto the serpent depe in helle p bounde  
¶ feyned woman alle that may confounde

## The Man of lawes Tale

Vertue and Innocence through thy malice  
y Bred is in the as nest of every byce

¶ Satan enuyous sithen that day  
That thou were chased from oure heritage  
Wele knowest thou to women the olde wey  
Thou madest eua to bring vs in seruatge  
Thou wolde fordone this cristen mariatge  
Thyn instrument so wele a wey the while  
Makyst thou of women whan thou wilt begyle

This sowdoneſſe whom I blame and wary  
Lette pryuely her counſeyl go theiſ wey  
What ſhulde I lenger in this tale tary  
She rideth to the ſowdan on a day  
And ſayd to him that ſhe wolde renye her lay  
And criſtendome of preſtes honde fonge  
Repentynge her that ſhe hethen was ſo longe

Beſeching him to do her that honoure  
That ſhe myght haue the cristen folke to feest  
To pleaſen them I wil do my labour  
The ſowdan ſayeth I wil do at poure beſt  
And kneeling thanked her of that request  
So glade he was he nyſt what to ſay  
She kyſſed her ſonne and home ſhe goth her way

Argued be theſe cristen folke to lond  
In ſurrey with a grette ſolempne route  
And haſtely this ſowdan ſent his ſonde  
Firſt to his moder and to alle the reigne aboute  
And ſayde his wiſ was come withoute doute  
And prayed her to ryde ayens the quene  
The honour of his reigne to ſuſteyne

¶ Grette was the prees and riche was the arraye  
Of ſurzyens and of Romaynes mete in fere  
The modre of the ſowdan riche and gay



## The Man of Lawes Tale

Resceyued her with alle glade chere  
As any modre myght her doughter dere  
And to the next cyte there besyde  
A soft paas solempnely thy ryde

That trowe I the tryumphe of Julius  
On whiche that Lucan makith suche a boost  
Was ryallere ne moze curious  
Than was the assemble of this blisful hoost  
But this scorpyon this wicked goost  
The sowdonnesse for alle her flatering  
Cast vndre this fur mortally to styng

The sowdan cometh him selue sone after this  
So rially that wondre was to telle  
And welcometh her with ioye and blys  
And thus in ioy and blisse ylete them duelle  
The frute of euery tale for to telle  
Men thought it whan tyme cam for the best  
That reuel to stynt and men to go to rest

The tyme cam this olde sowdonnesse  
Ordeyned hath this feste of whiche I tolde  
And to the feste cristen men dresse  
In generalle bothe yong and orde  
There may men rialte and fest beholde  
And deyntes mo than I can deuyse  
But alle to dere they bought it or they ryse

Woden woo that euer art succeoure  
To worldly blys spreynt with bitternesse  
The ende of ioye and oure worldly laboure  
Wo occupieth the fyne of oure gladnesse  
Berhyn this counsel for thy spherneesse  
Upon thy gladde day haue in thy mynde  
The vnwaar woo that cometh the behinde  
For shortly to telle at one worde

## The Man of lawes Tale

The sowdan and the cristen euerichone  
Been alle to hewyn and styched at the bord  
But it were only dame Custaunce allone  
This olde sawdonnesse cursed crone  
Bath With her frendes there done this cursed dede  
For she her selue wolde alle the countre lede

Ne there was surreyn none that was conuerted  
That of the counseyl of the sowdan wote  
That he nas alle to hewen or he astertyd  
And Custaunce haue taken anone fote hote  
And in a shippe sterelles god it wote  
They haue her set and hadde her lerne to sayle  
Dute of surry ageynward into pytyle

A certayn tresoure that she thidre ledde  
And soth to sayn bytyle grete plente  
They haue her yene and clothes eke she hadde  
And forth she jayled into the salt see  
O my custaunce fulle of benygnite  
O Emperours yong doughter dere  
He that is lorde ouer fortune be thy stere

She blissed her and with ful pytous boyce  
Vnto the crose of cryst thus sayd she  
O clere o welefulle autre holy croyce  
Rede of the lambes blode fulle of pyte  
That wesseth the worlde fro olde iniquite  
Me fro the feende and fro his clawes kepe  
That day that I shal drenche in the depe

Victoruous tre of protection trewe  
That only were worthy for to bere  
The king of heyn With his woundes ne we  
The white lamke that hurt was with a spere  
Flemez of feendes oute of him and of here  
Of whiche thy lynes saythfully extende



## The Man of Lawes Tale

Me hepe and yeue me my lyf samende  
peres and daies fleet this creature  
Through oute the se of greke into the strapte  
Of marroke as it was her aventure  
Many a sozpe mele may she bayte  
After her deth ful ofte may she wayte  
Or that the wilde waues wolde her dryue  
Vnto the place where she myght aryue

Men myght aske why she was nat slayne  
Eke at the feest who myght her body saue  
And I aunswerd to that demaunde agayne  
Who saued danyel in the horrible caue  
There euery wight were he mayster or knaue  
Was with the yowen fret or he a stert  
No wight but god that she bare in her hert

God lyst to she we his wouderfulle myracle  
In her for we shulde see his myghty werkes  
Crist that is of enery harme tryacle  
By certayn meanes as knowen clerkes  
Doth thinges that for certayn ende fulle derke is  
To mannyngs wytte that for oure ignorance  
We can nat knowe his prudent purueaunce

Now sith that she nas at the feest y slaue  
Who kept her fro drenchyn in the see  
Who kept Jonas in the fysshes maue  
Tyl he was spouted oute of mynyue  
Wele may men knaue it was no wight but he  
That kept the peple hebrayche fro drenching  
With dry fote oute through the se see passing

Who hath the foure spirytes of the tempeste  
That powere haue to nopen londe and see  
Both north and south west and est  
Anopeth nether lond house ne tre

## The May of lawes Tale

Sothly the comaundre of that was he  
That fro the tempest ay the woman kept  
As wele whan she woke as whan she slept  
Where myght this woman mete or drynke haue  
Thre yere and more lastith her wyrtayle  
Who fedde the egiptian mary in the caue  
Or in deserte nat but crist sauns fayle  
Ipye thousand folke it was as grete meruayle  
With louys fyue and fysshes to fede  
God sent his soyson at her grete nede

She dryueth forth into oure occian  
Through oute oure wilde see tyl at the last  
Vndre an holde that name I ne can  
Her in northumberland the wawes her cast  
And in the sond the shippe styched so fast  
That thens wolde it nat al that tyde  
The wil of crist was there she shulde abyde

The constable of the castel down is fare  
To se this wrache and alle the shippe he sought  
And fonde this wepy woman ful of care  
He fonde also the tresoure that she bought  
In her langage mercy she besought  
The lyf oute her body for to wyne  
Her to delyuer oute of the wo that she was in

A maner latyn corrupt was her speche  
But algates therby was she vnderstonde  
The constable whan him lyst no lengere seche  
This woful woman brought he to londe  
She knelith down and thankith cristes sonde  
But what she was she wolde to noman say  
For foule ne fayre though she sholde dye

She sayde she was so mased in the see  
That she forgate her mynde by her trouthe



## The Man of Lawes Tale

The constable hath of her so grete pyte  
And eke his wif that wepyth sore for routhe  
She was so diligent withouten slowthe  
To serue and please eueriche in that place  
That al her loue that loken in her face

The constable and dame hermetgylde his wif  
Were paynems and that countre euery where  
But hermetgylde loued her right as her lyf  
And custaunce hath so long y soiozned there  
In oryson with many a byttre tere

Tyl Iesus hath conuerted through his grace  
Dame hermetgylde the constablesse of that place

In alle that konde no cristen durst route  
Alle cristen men be fledde fro that countre  
Throughe paynems that conquered alle aboute  
The reame as wele by land as by see  
To Wales than fledde the cristianyte  
Of olde Britons dwelleng in that Ile  
Ther was no refute for the meane while

But yet nere cristen Britones sone exiled  
That there nare som in her pryuate  
Honoured crist and he then folke betgylde  
And nyght the castel suche there duelled thre  
That one of them was blynde and myght nat se  
But it were with thicke eyen of his mynde  
With whiche they seen after men be blynde

Bright was the sonne as in a somers day  
For whiche the constable and his wif also  
And Custaunce hath take the right wey  
Toward the see a furlong wey or two  
To pleyen and to romen to and fro  
And in this walke the blynde man they mette  
Croked and olde with eyen fast y shette

## The Man of lawes Tale

In the name of crist cried this brytoun  
Dame harmegylde yee me me my sight aye  
This lady wayt afrayed of that soun  
Best that her husband shortly for to seyn  
Wolde her for iesus cristes lore haue slayn  
Tyl custaunce made her bolde and bad her wirche  
The wyl of crist as doughter of holy chirche

The constable weyt abasshed of that sight  
And sayd what amounteth alle this fare  
Custaunce aunswerd sir it is cristes myght  
That helpith folke oute of the seendes snare  
And so fer forth she can oure lawe declare  
That she the constable or it were eue  
Conuertyd hath and on crist made him beleue

This constable was nothing lord of this place  
Of whiche I spake there he custaunce fonde  
But kept it strongly many a wynters space  
Vndre Alla king of al northumberland  
That was fulle wise and hardy of his hond  
Apenst the Scottes as men may wele here  
But turue agayn I wil to my matere

Sathan that euer vs wayteth to betyle  
Sa we of custaunce alle the perfection  
And cast anone hou he myght quyte her while  
And made a yong knyght duelling in that toune  
Loue her so hote of foule affection  
That berply him thought he shalle spyl  
But he of her onys myght haue his wylle

He wol with her but it auayleth naught  
She wolde do no synne by no wey  
And for despyte he compassed in his thought  
To make her on a shameful deth to dye  
He wayteth whan the constable is a wey



## The man of lawes Tale

And pryvely on a nyght he crept  
In hermettyldes chambre whyles she slepte  
Wery for waked in her orp sons  
Slepith hermettyld and custaunce also  
This knyght througth sathans temptacions  
Alle softly is to the bedde y goo  
And kytte the throte of her mettylde a two  
And leyde the bloody knyght by dame custaunce  
And went his wey ther god gyue him myschauce

Sone after cometh the constable agayn  
And eke Alla that was king of the lond  
And sa we his wif dyspytously slayne  
For whom he wept and wronge his honde  
And in the bedde the bloody knyf he fonde  
By dame custaunce allas what myght she say  
For bery wo her witte was alle a wey

To king Alla was tolde alle this myschauce  
And the tyme and where and eke the wise  
That in a shippe was founde this custaunce  
As here bifoze ye may haue herd deuyse  
The kinges hert of pyte gan aryse  
Whan he sa we the benygne creature  
Falle in disease and in mysauenture

For as the lambe toward his deth is brought  
So stant this innocent afore the king  
This fals knyght that hath this treson wrought  
Berith her on honde she hathe do this thing  
But nathelesse there was grete moornyng  
Among the peple and sayden they can nat gyffe  
That hadde nat do so grete a wiche dnyffe

For they haue seen her euiz so vertuons  
And lounyng hermettylde right as her lyf  
Of this bare witnesse eueriche in that house

## The man of lawes Tale

Saue that he slowe hermettyld with the knyf  
This gentyl king hath caught a grete motyf  
Of this witnesse and though he wolde enquire  
Deppere in this caas and trouth for to leze

Alas custaunce thou hast no champpon  
Ne syght canst thou nat wele a way  
But he that starf for oure redemption  
Bond sathan and yet lieth there he lay  
He be the stronge champion this day  
For but if crist open myracle by the  
Withoute gylt thou shalt be slayne as swythe

She sette her doune on her knees & thus she sayde  
Immortalle god that sauedest susanne  
Fro fals blame and thou merciful mayde  
Mary I mene doughter of seint Anne  
Bifore whose childe angeles synge of anne  
If I be gyltes of this felonye  
My socoure be or elles I shalle dye

Haue ye nat sumtyme a pale face  
Amonge a prees of him that hath been ladde  
Toward his dethe where he gettith no grace  
And suche a coloure in his face he hadde  
Men myght knowe his face that was be stadde  
Amonge al the faces in that route

So standith custaunce and loketh her aboute

O quenes lypynge whilom in prosperyte  
Duchesses and the ladies everichone  
Haue som routhe on their aduersite  
An emperours doughter stant alone

She wote nat to whom to make her mon e  
O blode ryalle that stondith in this drede  
Her been thy frendes at thy grete nede

This Alla king hath suche compassioun



## The man of lawes Tale

A gentyl herte is fulfilled of pyte  
That from his epen ran the water doune  
Now hastely go fet a boke quod he  
And if this knyght wol sweare that she  
Hath thes woman slayne yet wol we bs aypse  
Whom that we wol shalbe oure iustice

A breton boke writyn with euangelies  
Was fet and thereon she swoze anone  
She gylty was and in the meane whiles  
An honde him smote vpon the neche bone  
That down he fyl at ones as a stone  
And both his epen brest oute of his face  
In sight of euery body in that place

A boyce was herd in generable audience  
And sayde thou hast disclaundred gyltles  
The doughter of holy chirche in high presence  
Thus hast thou done and yete I holde my pees  
Of this meruayle agast was al the prees  
As mased folke they stonden euerichone  
For drede of wreche saue custaunce alone

Grete was the drede and eke the repentaunce  
Of them that hadde wronge suspectioun  
Vpon this sely Innocent instaunce  
And for this myracle in conclusioun  
And by custaunce mediacioun  
The king and many another in that place  
Conuerted was thanked be cristes grace

This fals knyght was slayne for his vntrouthe  
By iugement of the king Alla hastely  
And yet hath Custaunce of his deth grete routh  
And after this iesus of his mercy  
Made Alla to wedden ful solempnely  
This holy mayden that is so bright and shene

## The man of la Wes Tale

And thus hath crist made Custaunce a quene

But who was wofulle if I shalle nat lye  
Of this weddyng but dongelde and no mo  
The kinges modre ful of tyrannye  
Bez thought hez cursed hert brast a two  
She nolde nat her sonne had do soo  
Bez thought a despyte that he sholde take  
So straunge a creature vnto his make

Me lyst nat of the chaf ne of the stre  
Make so long a tale as of the corn  
What shulde I telle of the ryalte  
Of this mariage or whiche cours goth biforn  
Who blowith in a trompe or who in a horn  
The frute of euery tale is for to sey  
They ete and drinke daunce syng and pley  
They go to bedde as it is skylie and right  
For though that wyues be ful hoip thinges  
They must take in pacient a nyght  
Suche maner necessaries as been plesinges  
To folke that haue wedded them with ringes  
And ley a lytel theire holynesse a syde  
As for the tyme it may none othez betyde

On hez he begate a man childe anone  
And to a bisskop and to his constable eke  
He toke his wif to kepe when he is gone  
To Scotland ward his fomen for to seke  
Now faire Custaunce that is so humble and meke  
So long is gone with childe in that styll  
She kept hez chambre abyding goddes wil

The tyme is come a man childe she bere  
Mauricius at the fontstone they him calle  
This constable doth forth come a messangere  
And wrote vnto this kinge that cleped was alle



## The man of lawes Tale

How that this blisfulle tydynge is befallē  
And othez thinge whiche was neddfulle to say  
He takith his lettre and forth he goth his wey

This messangere to do his auantage  
Vnto the kinges modre rideth he swythe  
And salueth her fayre in his langage  
Madame quod he ye may be glade and blithe  
And thanken god an hundreth thousand sythe  
My lady the quene hath childe withouten doute  
To ioye and blisse of alle the reigne aboute

So here the lettres sealed of this thing  
That I must here in alle the hast I may  
If ye wyl ougtht to poure son the king  
I am youre seruauent both nyght and day  
Donegeld aunswerd as now at this tyme nay  
But here alle nyght I wille thou take thy rest  
Tomorow I wil say the what me lyst

This messangere dranke sadly ale and wyne  
And stolen were his lettres pryuelly  
Dute of his boy whiles he slept as a swyne  
And countrefeted was fulle subtely  
A nother letere wrought ful synfully  
Vnto the king directed of this matere  
fro his constable as ye may after here

The lettre spake the quene delpyered was  
Of so horrible a feendly creature  
That in the castel none so hardy was  
There no while any wight may endure  
The modre was an elphe by auenture  
y comen by charmes or by socery  
And euery wight hatith her company

Wo was the king whan he this lettre hadde seyn  
But to no wight he tolde his sorowes soze

## The man of lawes Tale

But of his owen hond he wrote agayn  
Welcom the sonde of criste for euir more  
To me that am newelerned in this loze  
Forde Welcom be thy lust and thy ple saunce  
My lust I put alle in thy ordenaunce

Kepe this childe alle be it foule or fayre  
And eke my wif vnto my home comyng  
Criste whan him lyst may sende me an eyre  
More aggreable than this to my lyking  
This lettre he sealith pryuely wepyng  
Whiche to the messangere was y take sone  
And forth he goth there is nomore to done

O messangere fulspelled with dronknes  
Straunge is thy breth thy lymes flatern ay  
And thou bewrethest alle secretenesse  
Thy mynde is loze thou iangelyst as a Jap  
Thy face is turned as in a newe aray  
There dronknesse reigneth in any route  
There is no counseyle kept it is no doute

O donegelde I haue none englysshe digne  
Vnto thy malice and thy tyrannye  
And therfore to the feende I the resigne  
Let him endityn of thy traytoury  
Fy manysshe fy o nay by god I lye  
Fy feendly spyrite for I dare wele telle  
Though thou here walke thy spyrite is in helle

This messangere cometh fro the king agayn  
And at the kinges moders courte he light  
And she was of this messangere fulle fayne  
And pleased him in alle that euer she myght  
Be dronke and wele his gyrdyl bndre pight  
Be slepith and he snorteth in his gypse  
Al nyght tyl the son gan aryse



## The man of lawes Tale

After was his lettres stolen euerichone  
And countrefeted lettres in this wise  
The king comaundith his constable anone  
Up peyn of hanging and on high Iupse  
That he ne shulde suffer in no wise  
Custaunce in his reigne for to abyde  
Thre daies and a quarter of a tyde

But in the same shippe as he her fonde  
Her and her yong sonne and alle her gere  
He sholde put and croude fro the londe  
And charge her that she come neuir est there  
O my Custaunce wele may thy goost haue fere  
And slepen in thy dreame by penaunce  
Whan donegælde castith alle this ordenaunce

This messangere on morowe whan he woke  
Vnto the castelle holdith the next way  
And vnto the Constable he the lettres toke  
And whan that he this pytous lettre sawe  
Fulle often he sayde allas and wele a wep  
Lord crist quod he hou may this worlde endure  
So fulle of synne is many a creature

O myghty god if that it be thy wille  
Sithen thou art rightfulle inge hou may it be  
That thou wil suffre Innocence to spylle  
And wicked folke reigne in prosperite  
O gode Custaunce alias so wo is me  
That I moot be thy turmentouze or elles deye  
O shamefulle deth there is none othez wep

Weppyn bothe olde and yong in that place  
Whan that the king this cursed lettre sent  
And Custaunce with a dedely pale face  
The wep toward the shippe she went  
But neuirthelesse she takith in gode entent

## The man of lawes Tale

The wyl of criste and knelinge on the strond  
She sayde ay welcome be thy sonde

He that me kept fro the fals blame  
Whiles that I was in the londe amonges you  
He can me kepe fro harme and eke fro shame  
In the salt see al though ye see nat hou  
As stronge as euil he was he is yet now  
In him I trust and in his moder deere  
That is to me my sayle and eke my stere

Her lytel childe lay wepyng in her arme  
And knelinge pytously to him she sayde  
Pease lytel childe I wil do the none harme  
With that the hyrchief from her hede she brayde  
And ouer his lytel eyen she it layde  
And in her arme she kullith it fulle fast  
And into heuyn by her eyen she cast

Moder quod she and mayde bright Marye  
Soth is that through womannys egement  
Mankynde was loost and dampned euil to dye  
For whiche thy childe was on the croce to rent  
Thy blisful eyen sawe al this turment  
Than is there no comparisoun bitwene  
Thyn wo and any wo that man may susteyne

Thou sawest thy childe slayn afore thyn eyen  
And yet now lyueth my lytel childe parfay  
Now lady bright to whom alle fulle crien  
Thou gloze of womanhode thou fayre may  
Thou haupn of refute bright sterre of day  
Reue on my childe that of thy gentylnesse  
Reuest on euery rewful in distresse

O lytel childe alas what is thy gilt  
That neuil wroughtest synne as yet parde  
Why wyl thy hazde fadre haue the spilt



## The Man of Lawes Tale

O mercy and dere constable quod she  
as let my lytel childe duelle here with the  
And if thou darst nat saue him for blame  
So kysse him onys in his faders name

Ther with she looked backward to the londe  
And sayde fare wele husbond routhlesse  
And by she rose and walked down the stronde  
Toward her shippe her folowith alle the prees  
And euer she prayeth her childe to holde his pease  
And takith her leue with an holy entent  
She blissith her and into ship she went

Wytayled was the shippe it is no drede  
Habundantly for her long space  
And othez necessaries that sholde nede  
She hadde ynough heried by goddes grace  
For wynde and weddre almyghty god purchase  
And bring her home I can no better sey  
But in the see she dryueth forth the wey

a Fla the king cometh sone after this

Unto his castel of whiche I tolde  
And asked where his wif and his childe is  
The constable gan aboute his hert to colde  
And pleynly alle the maner he him tolde  
As ye haue herd I can it telle no better  
And she with the kinges seale and his lettre

And sayde lorde as ye comaunded me  
On peyne of dethe so haue I do certayn  
This messangere turmentyd was tyl he  
Must be knowe and tel plat and playn  
fro nyght to nyght what place he hadde in layne  
And thus he with subtel enqueryng  
Imagyned was by whom this harme gan spring  
The honde was knowen that the lettre wrote

## The Man of Lawes Tale

And alle the benym of this cursed dede  
But in what wise certaynly I not  
The effecte is this that Alla oute of drede  
His modre slough that men may playnly rede  
For that she traytoure was to her ligeaunce  
Thus endith olde donegylde With my schaunce

The sorowe that this Alla nyght and day  
Makith for his wif and for his chylde also  
There is no tonge that it telle may  
But nowe wol I to custaunce go  
That fletyth in the see with peyne and wo  
Fyue yere and more as lpyeth cristes sonde  
Or that her shippe approached to any londe  
Vndre an hethen castel at the last  
The whiche the name nat in text I fynde  
Custaunce and eke her childe the see by cast  
Almyghty god that saued alle man kynde  
Haue on custaunce and her childe som mynde  
That fallen is in hethyn honde estsone  
In poynte to spyll as I shalle telle you sone

Down from the castel cometh there many a wight  
To gauryn on this shippe and on custaunce  
But shortly fro the castel on a nyght  
The lordes steward god yeue him my schaunce  
A theef that hadde renyed oure creaunce  
Cam into the shippe alone and sayde he sholde  
Her lemman be whether she wold or nolde  
Tho was this wretchid woman wo begone  
Her childe cryed and she cried pytously  
But blissed mary helped her right anone  
For with her stroglyng wele and myghtyly  
The thief fel ouer the borde al sodenly  
And in the see he dreynt for benyeaunce



## The Man of Lawes Tale

And thus hath crist vnwemmed kept custaunce

Whiche foule lust of luxurie lo thynde  
Nat only that thou fayntest mannys mynde  
But verily thou wylt his body shende  
The ende of thy werke or of thy lustes blynde  
Is compleynyng hou many one may men fynde  
That nat for werke somtyme but for thentent  
To do this synne be othez slayne or shent

Howe may this wech woman haue that strengith  
Bez to defende apenst the renegate  
Whiche golias vnmesurable of lengithe  
How myght dauid make the so mate  
So ping of armure and so desolate  
How durst he loke vpon thy face  
Wele may men seen it is but goddes grace

Who paue iudith corage or hardynesse  
To slee him olifernes in his tent  
And to delueryn oute of wrechidnesse  
The people of god I say to this entent  
That right as god spyrite and vigoure sent  
To them and saued them oute of myschaunce  
So sent he strengith and vigoure vnto custaunce

Forth goth hez ship through oute the narowe mouth  
Of iubalter and septe dryuynge alwey  
Somtyme west and somtyme north and southe  
And somtyme Est ful many a wey day  
Thyl cristes modre y blessed be she aye  
Hath shapen through hez endlesse godenesse  
To make an ende of alle hez heuynesse

Now let vs stynt of custaunce but a throwe  
And speke we of Romayns the emperoure  
That oute of Surry hath by lettres knowe  
The slaughtez of cristen folke and dishonoure

## The Man of lawes Tale

Doon into his doughter by a fals traytoure  
I mene the cursed and wichef sowednesse  
That at the feest leet she bothe more and lesse  
For whiche this Emperour hath sent anone  
His senatoure with ryalle ordenaunce  
And othe lordes god wote many one  
On surryns to take high vengeance  
They brynne and slee & bring them to myschaunce  
ful many a day but shortly this is the ende  
Homward to Rome they shapen them to wende  
This senatoure repayreth with victorie  
To Rome ward sealing fulle ryally  
And mette the ship dryvynge as sayeth the story  
In whiche custaunce sat ful pytously  
No thing knewe he what she was ne why  
She was in suche arraie that she nyl sey  
Of her astate though she shulde dey  
He bringith her to Rome to his wif  
He paye her to her and her yong song also  
And with the senatoure she ladde her lyf  
Thus can oure lady bring oute of wo  
Custaunce and many a nother mo  
And long tyme duelled she in that place  
In holy werkes euer was her grace  
The senatoures wif her ante was  
But for alle that she knewe her neuiz the more  
I wyl nolengere tary in this caas  
But to king Alla whiche I spake of yore  
For his wif wepith and sigheth sore  
I wol retorne and yet I wyl custaunce  
Vndre the senatours gouernaunce  
King Alla whiche that hadde his modre slayne  
Upon a day fyl in suche repentaunce



## The Man of Lawes Tale

And if I shortly telle shalke and pleyne  
To Rome he cometh to resceyue his penaunce  
And put him in the popes ordenaunce  
In high and lowe and Jesus crist besoughte  
Forpeue his wyched workes that he hath wroughte

The fame anone through Rome is born  
How Alla king shal come in pygremage  
By herbergeours that wenten him biforn  
For whiche the senatoure as was the vsage  
Kode him ayens and many of his lynage  
As wele to shewen his magnificence  
As to done any kyng reuerence

Grete chere doth this noble senatoure  
To kyng Alla and he to him also  
Euery of them doth to othere grete honoure  
And so besyl that on a day or two  
This senatoure is to kyng Alla go  
To fest shortly if I shal nat lye  
Custaunces sonne went in his company

Som men wolde say at the request of custaunce  
This senatoure had ledde this childe to fest  
I may nat telle euery circumstaunce  
Be as be may there was he at the leest  
But soth it is right at his moders heest  
Biforn Alla durynge the mete space  
The childe stode lokynge in the kinges face

Alla the king of this childe hath grete wondre  
And to the senatoure he sayde alone  
Whose is this fayre childe that stondeth yondre  
I not quod he by god and by seint John  
A modre he hath but fadre hath he none  
That I of wote and shortly in a stounde  
He tolde Alla how the childe was founde

## The Man of lawes Tale

But god woot quod this senatoure also  
So vertuous a lyuer in alle my lyf  
Ne sawe I neuiz as she ne herde of mo  
Of worldly wy men mayden wydowe or wif  
I dar wele say she hadde leuez with a knyf  
Through oute the brest than be a woman wyche  
There is no man coude bring her to the pryche

Now was this childe as lyke vnto custaunce  
As possible is a creature for to be  
This alla hath the face in remembraunce  
Of dame custaunce and theron mused he  
If that the childes modre were ought she  
That is his wif and pryuely he sight  
And spedde him fro the table that he myght

Parfay quod he the fanton is in my hede  
I ought to deme of rightfulle iugement  
That in the salt see my wif is dede  
And after ward he made his argument  
What wote I if crist haue her hidre sent  
My wif by see as wele as he her sent  
To my countre fro thens that she went

And after anone home with the senatoure  
Goth alla for to se this woundre chaunce  
This senatoure doth alla grete honoure  
And hastely he sent after custaunce  
But trust wele her lust nat for to daunce  
Whan she wiste wherfore was that sonde  
Vnnethes vpon her fete myght she stonde

Whan alla sawe his wif fayre he her grette  
And wepte that it was routhe to see  
For at the first loke that he on her sette  
He knewe berely that it was she  
And she for sorowe asombe stondith as a tre



## The Man of Lawes Tale

So was he 2 herte shytted in her distresse  
Whan she remembred of his unkyndnesse

Thys she swoned in his owne sight  
He wept and him excused pytously  
Now god quod he and alle his halowes bright  
So wisely on my soule haue mercy  
That of youre harme as gyltles am I  
As is my sonne Maurice solyke youre face  
Elles the fende me feche oute of this place

Long was the sobbyng and the byttre peyne  
Or that her wofulle herte myght sece  
Grette was the pyte for to here them playne  
Througgh whiche playntes gan her wo encrece  
I pray you alle my labour to relese  
I may nat tel theire wo vntyl to morowe  
I am so wery for to speke of sorowe

But fynally whan the soth is wyst  
That alla gyltles is of her wo  
I trowe an hundred tymes be they hyt  
And suche a blisse is there betwixt them two  
That saue the iope that lastith euermo  
There is none plyke that any creature  
Hath seen or shal whiles that the worlde may dure

Tho prayed she her husband mekely  
That in releef of her pytous peyne  
That he wolde pray her fadre specially  
That of his maieste he wolde enclyne  
To bouche sauf som day with him to dyne  
She prayed him eke he sholde by no wey  
Vnto her fadre no worde of her say

Some men wolde seyn that the childe maurice  
Doth this message vnto the Emperoure  
But as I gesse alla was nat so nyce

## The Man of Lawes Tale

To him that is so souerayne of honoure  
As he that is of cristes folke the floure  
Sent any childe but it is best to deme  
He went him selue and so it may wele seme

This emperoure hath graunted gentylly  
To come to dynez as he him besought  
And wele I suppose he lohed besely  
Upon this childe and on his doughter thought  
Ala goth vnto his Inne as him ought  
Arayed for this feest in euery wise  
As ferforth as his connyng may suffice

The morowe cam ala and gan him dresse  
And eke his wif the Emperoure for to mete  
And forth they ryden in ioye and in gladnesse  
And when she sawe her fadre in the strete  
She lyghteth down and fallith him to fete  
Fadre quod she poure yong childe custaunce  
Is now ful cleen oute of poure remembraunce

I am poure doughter Custaunce quod she  
That whilom ye haue sent into surrye  
It am I fadre that in the salte see  
Was put allone and dampned for to dye  
Now gode fadre mercy I you crye  
Sende me nomore into none hethnesse  
But thankith my lord here of his kyndnesse

Who can the pytous ioye telle alle  
Betwixt them thre sithen they be thus mette  
But of my tale make an ende I shalle  
The day goth fast I wyl no lengre lette  
These glade folke to dynez be y sette  
In ioye and blisse at mete I lette them duelle  
A thousand folde wele more than I can telle  
This childe maurice was sithen emperoure



## The Man of Lawes Tale

y made by the pope and lyued cristenly  
To cristes chirche dyd he grette honoure  
But I let al these stories passe by  
Of custaunce is my tale specialy  
In olde Romaynes gesses men may wele fynde  
Mauricius lyf I bere it nat in mynde

Than king Alla whan he his tyme sey  
With custaunce his holy wif so swete  
To englonde be they come the right wey  
Where as they lyuen in ioye and in quyet  
But lytel while it lasted I you behete  
Joy of this worlde but tyme wyl nat abyde  
Fro day to nyght it chaungith as the tyde

Who lyueth euir in suche deylte a day  
That is ne meued either in conscience  
Do ire or talent or som kynnes affray  
Enuye or pryde or passioun or offence  
I ne say but for the ende of this sentence  
That lytel while in ioye or plesaunce  
Lastith the lyf of Alla with custaunce

For deth that takith of high and lowe his rent  
Whan passed was a yere eyn as I gesse  
Dute of this worlde this king Alla is went  
For whom custaunce hath fulle grette heynesse  
Now pray we to god his soule blisse  
And dame custaunce fynally to say  
Towarde the toun of Rome goth her way

To Rome is come this holy creature  
And fyndeth her frendes there hole and sounde  
Now is she scaped alle her auenture  
And whan she her fadre hath y founde  
Doun on her knees fallith to grounde  
Weppng in herte for tenderesse blythe

## The Marchauntes Prologue

She harpeth god an hundreth thousand sythe  
In vertue and in holy almes dede  
They lpyen alle and neuiz a sondre wende  
Tyl de the departed them this lyf they lede  
And faryth now wele my tale is at an ende  
Nowe Iesus crist that of his myght may sende  
Ioye after wo gouerne vs in his grace  
And kepe vs alle that been in this place

Here endith the man of lawes tale  
And begynneth the Marchauntes prologe

Wepyng and waylyng care and othez sorowe  
I haue ynough both eyn and eke a morowe  
Quod the marchaunte and so haue othez mo  
That wedded be I trowe that it be so  
For wele I wote it fareth so by me  
I haue a wif the worst that may be  
For though the feende cuppled to her were  
She wolde him ouirmache I dar wele swere  
What shulde I reherse in spectalle  
Her high malice she is a shrewe with alle  
There is a long and a large difference  
Betwixt grysilidis grete pacience  
And of my wif the passing cruelte  
Were I vnbounde also mot I the  
I wolde neuiz este come in thee snare  
We wedded men lyue in sorowe and care  
Asay who so wol and he shalle fynde  
That I say sothe by seint thomas of ynde  
As for the more parte I say nat alle  
God shelde that it shulde so befall  
A gode siz hoost I haue wedded be



## The Marchauntes Prologe

These monethes two and more nat parde  
And yet I trowe he that alle his lyf  
Hath weddyd be though men him ryf  
Unto the hert ne coude in no maner  
Telle so moche sorowe as I now here  
Coude telle of my Wyues cursednesse  
Now quodoure hoost marchaunte so god the blisse  
Sithen ye so mekylknowe of that arte  
Ful hartely I pray you telle vs part  
Gladly quod he but of myn owne soze  
For sorp hert I telle may nomore

Here endith the Marchauntes prologue  
And here begynneth his Tale



W Bylom thez was duelling in lumbardy  
A worthy knyght that born was at paup  
In whiche he lyued in grete prosperyte

## The Marchauntes Tale

And ly pere a wyfles man was he  
And folowed aþ his bodyly delyte  
On women ther was his appetyte  
As doon theſe foules that been ſeculere  
And whan that he was paſſed ly pere  
Were it for holynesse or for dotage  
I can nat ſay but ſuche a grette corage  
Hadde this knyght to be a wedded man  
That day and nyght he doth alle that he can  
To a ſpye where he myght wedded be  
Prayng oure lord graunt him that he  
Myght onys knowe that bliſſful lyf  
That is betwixt an huſbond and his wyf  
And for to lye vndre the holy bonde  
With whiche god firſt man and woman bonde  
None other lyf ſayde he is worth a bene  
For wedloke is ſo eaſy and ſo clene  
That in this worlde it is a paradise  
Thus ſayde this olde knyght that was ſo wiſe  
And certaynly as ſothe as god is kyng  
To take a wyf is a glorious thing  
And namely whan a man is olde and hore  
Than is a wyf the frute of the treſore  
Than ſholde he take a yong wyf and a fayre  
On whiche he myght engendre him an heire  
And lede his lyf in ioy and in ſolace  
Where as theſe bachelers ſyngen alas  
Whan that they fynden eny aduerſite  
In loue whiche nis but childes banpte  
And truly it ſytteth wele to be ſo  
That bachelers haue peyne and wo  
On brotyl grounde they byld and brotylneſſe  
They ſynde freylte whan they wene ſyherneſſe



## The Marchauntes Tale

They lyue But as a Byrde or as a best  
In lyberte and vndre none arest  
There as a wedded man in his astate  
Lyueth his lyf blissful and ordynat  
Vndre the yoke of mariage y bounde  
Wele may his hert in ioye and blisse ha bounde  
For who can be so buyom as a wyf  
Who is so trewe and eke so ententyf  
To kepe him seke and hole as is his make  
For wele or wo she wil him nat forsake  
She is nat wery him to loue and serue  
Though that he lye bedred tyl he sterue  
And yet som clerkes sayen it is nat so  
Of whiche he Theophraste is one of tho  
What force though theophrast lyst lye  
Ne take no wif quod he for husbondrye  
As for to spare in householde thyn expence  
A trew sernaunt doth more dilygence  
Thy gode to kepe than doth thy selue wif  
For she wyl clayme half part alle her lyf  
And if that thou be seek so god me saue  
Thy berre frendes or a true knaue  
Wol kepe the bet than she that wayteth ay  
After thy deth and hath done many a day  
This sentence and an hundred thinges worse  
Writeth this man there god his bones corse  
But take no hepe of suche banyte  
Do fyre theophraste and herkyn me  
A wif is goddes pest berply  
Al othez maner pestes hardely  
As londes rentes pastures or comune  
Or moebles al ben pestes of fortune  
That passen as a shadowe on a walle

## The Marchauntes Tale

But drede nat if I playnly speke shalle  
A wyf wil last and in thy house endure  
Wele lenger than the lyst parauenture  
Mariage is a fulle grete sacramnt  
Who that hath no wif is but shent  
He lyueth helples and is alle desolate  
I speke of folke in seculer astate  
And herken why I say nat this for nought  
The woman is for mannys helpe y wrought  
The high god whan he hadde Adam makid  
And sa we him allone bely naked  
God of his grete goodnesse sayde than  
Let vs now make an helpe to this man  
Lyke to him selue and than he made eue  
Here may ye se and here by may ye preue  
That a wyf is mannys helpe and his comforte  
His paradyce terreste and his disporte  
So buyum and so vertuons is she  
They must nedes lyue in bnyte  
O flesshe they be and of o blode I gesse  
Not but one herte in wil and in distresse  
A wif a seinte Mary benedicite  
How myght a man haue any aduersite  
That hath a wif certes I can nat sey  
The blisse that is betwixt them twey  
There may no tonge telle it or hert thynke  
If he be poure she helpith him to swynke  
She kepith his gode and wastith it neuir a dele  
And alle that her husbond lust shelykith wele  
She sayeth nat onys nay when he sayeth ye  
Do this sayeth he al redy sir saythe she  
O bliffulle ordre o wedloke precious  
Thou art so mery and eke so vertuons



## The Marchauntes Tale

And so comended and approued eke  
That euery man that holt them worth a leke  
Upon his bare knees ought alle his lyf  
Thankyn his god that him sent a wyf  
Whelles praye god him for to sende  
A wyf to leste vnto his lyues ende  
For than his lyf is set in spernesse  
He may nat be desceyued as I gesse  
So that he worke after his wyues rede  
Than may he boldly bere bp his hede  
They be so trewe and therto eke so wyse  
For whiche if thou wylt werche as the wyse  
Do alway as the woman wol the rede  
Lo hou iacob as these clerkes rede  
By gode counseyl of his modre rebecke  
Bonde the hyddes shynne aboute his necke  
For whiche his faders benyson he wan  
Lo iudith as the story wele tel can  
By wyse counseyl she goddes people kept  
And slewe him olifernes while he slept  
Lo hou abyttayl by gode counseyl that she  
Saued her husbond Nabal whan that he  
Sholde haue be slayne and loke hester also  
By gode counseyl delpuered oute of wo  
The people of god and made mardoche  
Of assure enhaunced for to be  
There is no thyng in gre superlatyf  
As sayeth senequye aboue an humble wyf  
Suffre thy wyues tong as caton byt  
She shalle comaunde and thou shalt suffre it  
And yet she wyl obey of curtesye  
A wyf is kepaz of thy husbondrye  
Wele may the sekeman be wayle and wepe

## The Marchauntes Tale

There as no wif is the house to kepe  
I warne the if thou wilt wisely wirche  
So wile thy wyf as crist loueth his churche  
If thou louest thy selue thou louest thy wyf  
Noman hatyth his flesshe but in his lyf  
He fostrieth it and therfore bydde I the  
Cherisse thy wif or thou shalt neuir the  
Busbond and wif what so men iape or pley  
Of worldly folke holden the sikez wey  
They been knytte they may no harme betyde  
And namely bpon the wyues syde  
For whiche this January of whiche I tolde  
Considreth hath in his daies olde  
The lusty lyf the vertuouse quete  
That is in mariage hony I wete  
And for his frendes on a day he sent  
To telle them the effecte of his entent  
With face sadde he hath his tale to them tolde  
He sayd frendes I am hore and olde  
And almoost god woot at my pyttes brynke  
Upon my soule som what must I thynke  
I haue my body folply despended  
Blyssed be god it shalbe amended  
For I wolde be certayne a weddyd man  
And that anone in alle the hast that I can  
Vnto som mayde fayre and tendre of age  
I pray you shapith for my mariage  
Al sodenly for I wil nat abyde  
And I wol fonde to a spye on my syde  
To whom I may be weddid hastily  
But for a smoehe as ye be mo than I  
Ye shal rather suche a thyng aspyen  
Than I where me lyt best alpyen



## The Marchauntes Tale

But one thing I warne you my frendes dere  
I wol none olde wif haue in no manere  
She shal nat passe xbi yere certayne  
Olde fyssh & yong flesshe wolde I haue ful fayn  
Bet is he sayde a pyke than a pykerel  
Bettre than olde beef is the tendre bele  
I wol no woman of xxx yere of age  
It is but bene strawe and grete forage  
And eke these olde wydowes god it wote  
They can so mekyl craft in wadys bote  
Somekyl broken harme what them lyst  
That with them shulde I neuiz lyue in rest  
For sondry scoles makith subter clerkes  
Woman of many a scole half a clerke is  
But certaynly a yong thing may men gye  
Right as man with hondes warm wey ppe  
Therfore I say you playnly in a clause  
I wol none olde wif haue for this cause  
For if so were if I hadde suche my schaunce  
That I in her coude haue no plesaunce  
Than sholde I lede my lyf in aboutrye  
And so streyght to the deuyll whan I dye  
Ne children shulde I none on her getyn  
yete hadde I leuyr houndes hadde me etyn  
Than that myn heritage shulde falle  
In straunge honde and thus I telle you alle  
I doute nat I wote the cause why  
Men sholde wedde and ferthermore woot I  
There spekith many men of mariage  
That wote nomore of it than doth my page  
For whiche causes men sholde take a wif  
If he may nat lyuen chaste his lyf  
Take him a wif with grete deuocioun

## The Marchauntes Tale

Bicause of lefulle procreacioun  
Of children to the honoure of god aboue  
And nat only for paramoure ne for loue  
And for they shulde lechery eschue  
And yelde theire dette whan that it is due  
Or for eche of them shulde helpe othez  
In my schief as the sustre shalle the Brodre  
And yue in chastite fulle holyly  
But sires by poure leue that am nat I  
For god be thanked I dar make abaunt  
I fele my lymes starke and sufficiaunt  
To do alle that a man belongith to  
And am stronge ynogh to ryde or go  
Though I be hore I fare as doth a tre  
That blosometh or that frute y woxen be  
A blosomed tre is neither drye ne dede  
I fele me nowhere hore but on my hede  
My herte and al my lymes been as grene  
As laurez that through the yere is sene  
And sithen ye haue herd al myn entent  
I pray you that to my wil ye assent  
Of dyuerse men dyuersly him tolde  
Of mariage many ensamples olde  
Som blamed it som prysed it certayn  
But at the last shortly for to sayn  
As alday fallith alteracioun  
Betwixt frendes in disputacioun  
There fyl a stryf Bitwixt his brethern two  
Of whiche the one was cleped Placebo  
Justinus sothly called was that othez  
Placebo sayd o January Brothez  
Ful lytel nede hadde ye my lorde so dere  
Counseyl to aske of any that is here





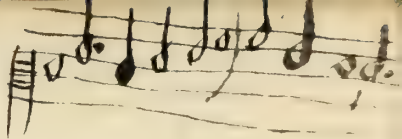
But that ye be one so ful of sapience  
 That you ne lpheth for your high prudence  
 To wepul for the worde of salamon  
 This worde sayed he to vs everychone  
 Worke alle thing by counseyl thus sayed he  
 And than shalt thou nat repente the  
 But though Salamon spake suche a worde  
 Myn owne dere brother and my lord  
 So wisely god my soule bring at rest  
 I holde youre owne counseyl for the best  
 For brother myn of me take this motyf  
 I haue now been a courtman alle my lyf  
 And yet god wote though I vnworthy be  
 I haue stonde in fulle grette and high degre  
 A bounte lordes in ful grette astate  
 yet hadde I neuiz with none of them deBate  
 I neuiz contraried them truly  
 I wote wele that my lord can more than I  
 what that he sayeth I holde it ferme and stable  
 I say the same or othez thing semblable  
 A fulle grette fole is any counseloure  
 That serupth a lord of grette honoure  
 That dar presume or onys thynke it  
 That his counseyl sholde passe his lordes wytte  
 Nay lordes be no foles by my say  
 ye haue youre selue spoken here to day  
 So high sentence so holy and so wele  
 That I consent and conferme euery dele  
 youre wordes and al youre opunyon  
 By god thez is no man in this toun  
 Ne in ytalpe coude better haue sayde  
 Crist holdith him of this ful wele apayed  
 And truly it is an high corage

## The Marchauntes Tale

Of any man that stept is in a age  
To take a yong wif for by my fadre kynne  
youre hert hongith vpon a ioly yyn  
Doth now in this matere as ye lyst  
For fynally I holde it for the best  
Justinus that ay sat ful stylye and herde  
Right on this wise he to placebo answerd  
Now brother myn quod he be pacient I pray  
Sithen ye haue sayde herbyn what I say  
Seneke among other wordes wise  
Sayeth that a man ought him right wele auyse  
To whom he yeueth his lond or his catel  
And sithnes I ought me auyse right wele  
To whom I yeu my gode a way frome  
Wele moche more I ought for to auyse me  
To whom I yeu my body for alwey  
I warne you wele it is no chilles play  
To take a wyf withoute auysement  
Men must enquere this is myn assent  
Whether she be wise sobre or dronke we  
An oute goer or other wey a shrew  
A chidester or a waster of thy gode  
Riche or poure or of maners wode  
Al be it so that no man fynde shalle  
None in this worlde that trottith hole in alle  
Ne man ne beest suche as men can deuise  
But neuirthelesse it ought ynough suffice  
With any wif if so that she hadde  
Mo thewes gode than her vices hadde  
And al this askith leyse to enquere  
For god it wote I haue wept ful many a tere  
Ful pryncely sithen I hadde a wif  
Dryse who so wyl a wedded mannys lyf



## The Marchauntes Tale



Certayne I fynde it but cost and care  
And obseruaunces of alle blisses bare  
And yet god wote my nyghbours aboute  
And namely of women many a route  
Sayn that I haue the moost stedefast wif  
And eke the mekest one that berith lyf  
But I wote best where bringith me my sho  
ye may for me right as ye lyke doo  
Aupseth you ye be a man of age  
How that ye entren into mariatge  
And namely With a yong wif and a fayre  
By him that made watyr erthe and eyre  
The yongest man that is in alle this route  
Is besy ynough to bring it aboute  
To haue a wif alone but trustith me  
ye shal nat plesen her only peres thre  
This is to say to do her ful plesaunce  
A wif askith ful many an obseruaunce  
I pray you that ye be nat euyl apayed  
Wele quod this January and haue ye sayd  
Strawe for thy seneke and thy prouerbes  
I counte nat a paner ful of herbes  
Of scole termes wiser men than thou  
As thou hast herde hath sentyd right now  
To my purpose Placebo what say ye  
I say he is a cursed man quod he  
That lettyth matromonye sikerly  
And with that worde they rysen sodenly  
And been assentyd anone that he sholde  
Be wedded whan him lyst and where he wolde  
Righ fante sy and the besy coriounesse  
Fro day to day gan in the soule impresse  
Of January aboute his mariage

## The Marchauntes Tale

Many faire shappe and many faire visage  
There passith through his herte nyght by nyght  
As who so toke a myrroure polished bright  
And set it in a comon market place  
Than shulde he se many a figure pace  
By this myrroure and in the same wise  
Can January in with his thought deuyse  
Of maydens whiche duelled there beside  
He wist nat where she myght abyde  
For if one hadde beaute in her face  
A nother stont in the peoples grace  
For her sadnesse and her benignyte  
That of the people grete boyce hadde she  
And som were riche and had hadde name  
But neuerthelesse bitwixt earnest and game  
He at the last appoynted him in one  
And lete alle othez fro his herte gone  
And chose her on his owne auctoryte  
For loue is blynde a day and may nat see  
And whan he was in his bedde y brought  
He portreyed in his herte and in his thought  
Her fresshe beaute and her age tendre  
Her myddel smalle her armes long and skendre  
Her wise gouernaunce and her gentylnesse  
Her womanly beryng and her sadnesse  
And whan he was of her condescended  
Him thought his chose myght nat be amended  
For whan he him selue concluded hadde  
Him thought eche othez mannys witte so hadde  
That impossible it were for to repleye  
Aynst his choyse this was his fantesye  
His frendes sent he to at his instaunce  
And prayed them to do him that plessaunce



## The Marchauntes Tale

That hastely they wolde to him come  
He wolde abridge theire labour al / some  
Nedith no more for him to go ne ryde  
He was appoynted there he wolde abyde  
Placebo cam and eke his frendes sone  
And alderfirst he badde them alle abone  
That none of them none argumentes shorde make  
Apenst the purpos whiche that he hadde y take  
Whiche purpos was pleisant to god sayde he  
And berry grounde of his prosperyte  
He sayde ther was a mayden in the toun  
Whiche that of beaute hadde grete renoun  
Al were it so she was of smalle degre  
Suffisith him her youth and her beaute  
Whiche mayde he sayde he wolde haue to his wif  
To lede in ease and holynesse his lyf  
And thanke god that he myght haue her alle  
That no wight with his blisse parten shalle  
And prayed them to labour in this nede  
And shapen that he fayleth nat to spede  
And than he sayde his spyrite was at ease  
Than is quod he nothing me may displese  
Saue one thing prickith me my conscience  
The whiche I wyl reherse in youre presence  
ye haue herd sayde ful long sithnes ago  
Ther may no man haue parfite blisses two  
This is to say in erth and eke in heuyn  
For though he kept him fro the synnes seuyñ  
And eke from euery braunche of that tre  
yet is there so parfyte prosperyte  
And so grete ease and lust in mariage  
That euiz I am agast now in myñ age  
That I shal lede now so mery a lyf

## The Marchauntes Tale

So delicate Withoute wo and stryf  
That I shal haue my heuyn in erthe here  
For sithen berry heuyn is bought so dere  
With tribulacion and grete penaunce  
How sholde they than that lyue in suche plesaunce  
As al wedded men doon With theire wyues  
Come to the blisse there crist eterne on lyue is  
This is my drede and ye my Brethren tway  
Assyleth me this question I you pray  
Justinus whiche that hatyd his folp  
Aunswerd anone right in his iapery  
And for he wolde his long tale abridge  
He wolde none othez auctoryte aledge  
But sayde sir if thez be none obstakyl  
Othez than this god of his high myracle  
And of his mercy may so for you wirche  
That oz ye haue youre rightes of holy chirche  
ye may repente of wedded mannys lyf  
In whiche ye say there is no woo ne stryf  
And cles god forbede But if he sent  
A wedded man grace him to repent  
Wele ofter rather than a synngle man  
And therfore the best rede that I can  
Dispeyareth you nat but haue in memory  
Parauenture she may be youre purgatory  
She may be goddes mene and goddes whippe  
Than shal youre soule bp to heuyn shippe  
Swifter than an arowe doth oute of a bowe  
I hope to god herafter shal ye knowe  
That there nys none so grete felycite  
In mariage ne neuiz none shalbe  
That you shal let of youre saluacion  
So that ye vse it as shyl is and reson



## The Marchauntes Tale

The lustes of youre Wif temporally  
And that ye please her nat to amourously  
And that ye kepe you eke from others synne  
My tale is done for my Witte is thynne  
Be nat agast herof my dere Brothre  
But let vs Wade fro this matere to an othere  
The Wif of Bathe if ye haue vnderstonde  
Of mariage whiche I haue in honde  
Declared hath ful wele in litel space  
Fareth now wele god haue you in his grace  
And with this worde he with his Brothre  
Hath take his leue and eche of them of othere  
For whan they sawe it must nedes be  
They wrought so by slygh and wise trefye  
That this mayde whiche that May hight  
As hastely as euir that she myght  
Shal wedded be vnto Januarpe  
I trowe it were you long to tarpe  
If I you tolde of euery escripte and bonde  
By whiche she was enscuffed in his lond  
Othere for to herke of her riche arraye  
But fynally comen is the day  
That to the chirche bothe been they went  
For to resceyue the holy sacrament  
Forth cometh the preest with stole aboute his necke  
And badde her be lyke Sarra and rebecke  
In wisdom and trouthe of mariage  
And sayde his oryson in his vsage  
And croched them and badde god sholde them bles  
And made al siker ynough with holynesse  
Thus been they weddid with solempnyte  
And at the feest sytteth he and she  
With othere worthy folke vpon the deys

## The Marchauntes Tale

Al fulle of ioye and blisse is the paleys  
And ful of instrumentes and bytayne  
The moost deyntheous of alle pwayne  
Bifore him stode instrumentes of suche a soun  
That Orpheus ne of Thebes amphion  
Ne made neuiz suche a melodye  
At euery cours cam loude mynstralcye  
That neuiz ioab tromped for to here  
Neyther the theomodas half so clere  
At thebes whan the cyte was in doute  
Bachus the wyne them shenkeith alle aboute  
And venus lough upon euery wight  
For January was becomen her knyght  
And wolde bothe assaye his corage  
In libertye as eke in mariage  
And with her firebronde in her honde aboute  
Daunsith bifore the bryde and alle the route  
And certaynly I dar wele sayn right this  
Eumenys that god of weddyng is  
Sa we neuiz in his lyf so mery a wedded man  
Holde thou thy pease thou poete marcian  
That writest vs that ilke a wedding mery  
Of her philologye and of him mercurye  
And of songes that the muses song  
To smalle is bothe penne and eke tong  
For to discreuen of this mariage  
Whan tendre yowthe hadde wedded stouppynge age  
There is suche myrthe that it may nat be writen  
Assay youre selue and than may ye wyppen  
Of that I lacke or none in this matere  
May that sittyth with so benygne chere  
Her to be holden it semeth a fayr ye  
Quene hester loke neuiz with suche an eye



## The Marchauntes Tale

On assuere so meke a loke as she  
I may you nat deuyse al her beaute  
But thus moche of her beaute telle I may  
That she was lyke the bright morow of May  
Fulfilled of al beaute and of plesaunce  
This January is rauysshed in a traunce  
At euery tyme he loked on her face  
But in his herte he gan her manace  
That he that nyght in armes wolde her streyne  
Harder than Paris euir did Eleyne  
But neuir thelesse yet hadde he grete pyte  
That that nyght offende her must he  
And thought allas o tendre creature  
Now wolde god ye myght wele endure  
Al my corage it is so sharpe and hene  
I am a gast ye may it nat sustene  
But god forbede I dyd alle my myght  
Nowe wolde god it were woyn nyght  
And that the nyght wolde lest euir mo  
I wolde that al this people were ago  
And synally he doth alle his labour  
As he myght best sauyng his honoure  
To hast them fro the mete in subtel wise  
The tyme cam that reason was to ryse  
And after that men daunsed and dranke fast  
And spices alle aboute the house they cast  
And ful of ioye and blisse is euery man  
Alle but a squyer that hight Dampayn  
Whiche carft bifoze the knyght many a day  
He was so rauasshed on his lady May  
That for the berry peyne he was nyght wode  
Almoost he sweltyd and swouned there he stode  
So soze hath Venus hurte him with her bronde

## The Marchauntes Tale

As that she bare it daunsyng in her honde  
And to his bedde he went him hastely  
Nomoze of him at this tyme speke I  
But there I lette him wepe ynough and pleyne  
Tyl fresshē may wyl rewe vpon his peyne  
O perous fyre that in the bedstrawe bredith

    O famplier so that his seruice bedith  
O seruaunt traytoure fals homely he we  
Pyke to the addre sligh in bosom vntrewe  
God sheld vs alle from youre acqeyntaunce  
O January drunken in plesaunce  
Of mariage. se hou that thy Dampayn  
Thyn owne squyer and thy boyn man  
Entendith for to do the a belonp  
God graunte the thyn homely foo to aspy  
For in this worlde nys worse pestilence  
Than an homely fo alday in thy presence  
Parfourmed hath the sonne his arke dyurne  
Ne lenger may the body of him sojourne  
On the orizont as in that latitude  
Nigh with his mantel that is so derke and rude  
Can for to spede the emyspery aboute  
For whiche departed is the lusty route  
Fro January with thanke on euery syde  
Home to their houses lustely they ryde  
There as they do thinges as them lyst  
And when they se their tyme they go to rest  
Sone after this hastely this January  
Wolde go to bedde he wolde no lenger tary  
He drynkith ypocrace clarey and berrage  
And spices hote to encrese his corage  
And many a lectuary hadde he ful fyne  
Suche as the cursed monke dan constantyn



## The Marchauntes Tale

Hath Writen in his booke of coitu  
To ete them alle he wolde nothing escheu  
And thus to his pryue frendes sayde he  
For goddes loue as sone as it may be  
Let boyde al this house in curtese wise  
And they haue done right as he wolde deuyse  
Men dronken and the trauers drewe anone  
This bryde was brought to bedde as styll as stone  
And whan the bedde was with the preest blessid  
Dute of the chambre hath euery wight him dressid  
And January hath fast in armes take  
His fresshe may his paradise his make  
He kullith her he kissith her ful ofte  
With the brysselles of his berd vnsoft  
Pyke to the shynne of hounde fyssh sharp as brere  
For he was shaued alle newe in his manere  
He rubbeth her vpon her tendre face  
And sayde thus alas I must trespase  
To you my spouse and you gretly offende  
Or tyme come that I wyl down descende  
But nathelesse considreth wele quod he  
Ther is no workman what so euer he be  
That may worche wele and hastely  
This wolde he do at leysur parfytly  
It is no force hou long that we pley  
In trewe wedloke coupled be we twey  
And blissed be the yoke that we be in  
For in oure actes we may do no syn  
A man may do no synne with his wif  
Ne hurte him selue with his owne knyfe  
For we haue leue to pley vs by the lawe  
Thus lauborith he tyl the day gan da we  
And than he takith a soppe in fyne clarze

## The Marchauntes Tale

And by right in his bedde sitteth he  
And after that he song ful loude and clere  
And byssith his wif and makith wanton chere  
He was al coltysshe and ful of ragery  
And ful of iargoon as is fliched pye  
The skache shynne aboute his necke shakith  
While that he song so chaunteth he and crakith  
But god wote what may thought in her herte  
Whan she sawe him by sytting in his shert  
In his nyght cappe and with his necke lene  
She pryseth nat his pleipng worth a bene  
Than sayde he thus my rest I wol take  
Now day is come I may no lengre wake  
And down he leyde his hede and slepte tyl pryme  
And after whan that he sawe his tyme  
Up riseth January but fresshe may  
She holdith her chambre tyl the fourth day  
As vsage is of wyues for the best  
For euery laboure somtyme must haue rest  
Or elles long may he nat endure  
This is to say nolyues creature  
Be it fysshe or byrde beste or man  
Now wyl I speke of wofulle Dampayn  
That langureth for loue as ye shal here  
Therefore I speke to him in this manere  
I say o sely Dampayn alas  
Answer to this demaunde in this caas  
How shalt thou thy lady fresshe May  
Telle thy woo she wyl alwey say nay  
Eke if thou speke she wol thy wo be wreyne  
God be thy helpe I can no better seyn  
This seeke Dampayn in Venus grete fyre  
So brennyth that he dyeth for desyre



## The Marchauntes Tale

For whiche he puttyth his lyf in auenture  
No lenger myght he in this wise endure  
But pryuelly a penner gan he borowe  
And in a lettze wrote alle his sorowe  
In maner of a complaynte or a lay  
Vnto his fresshe and faire lady may  
And in a purs of sylke hing it on his sherte  
He hath y put and y leyde it on his herte  
That January hath wedded fresshe may  
The mone that at none was that day  
Dute of Taure was in the Tanker slyden  
So long hath mayus in her chambre byden  
As custome is vnto these nobles alle  
A byrde shal nat etyn in the halles  
Tyl daies foure or thre at the lest  
Passed be than lette him go to feest  
The fourth day complete fro none to none  
Whan that the high masse was y done  
In halles sat this January and May  
As fresshe as is the bright someres day  
And so besyl that this gode man  
Remembrith him vpon this Dampayn  
And sayde seint mary how may this be  
That dampayn entendith nat to me  
Is he ay seek or how may this betyde  
His squyer whiche that stode him besyde  
Excused him bicause of his seeknesse  
Whiche lettith him to do his besynesse  
None othez cause myght make him to tary  
That me forthinketh quod this January  
He is a gentyl squyer by my trouthe  
If that he dyed it were harme and routh  
He is wise discrete honest and secrete

## The Marchauntes Tale

As any man I wote of his degre  
And therto manly and che seruyfable  
And for to be a thrifty man right able  
But after mete as sone as euir I may  
I wyl my selue bispyte him and may  
To do him al the comforte that I can  
And for that worde him blissed euery man  
That of his bountye and of his gentylnesse  
He wolde so comforte in sekenesse  
His squyer for it was a gentyl dede  
Dame quod this January take gode hede  
That after mete ye with youre women alle  
Whan ye haue be in chambze oute of this halles  
That alle ye go to se this Dampayn  
To do him disporte he is a gentyl man  
And tellith that I wyl him bispyte  
Haue I nothing but restyd me a lyte,  
And spede you fast for I wol abyde  
Tyl that ye slepe fast by my syde  
And with this worde he gan to him calle  
A squyer that was marshal of his halles  
And tolde him certayn thynges what he wolde  
This fresshe may hath streight hez wey holde  
With alle hez women vnto this dampayn  
Doun by his bedde syde anone sat she than  
Comfortyng him as godey as she may  
This dampayn whan he his tyme say  
In pryuy wise his purse and eke his byl  
In whiche that he writen hadde alle his wyl  
Rath put into hez honde withouten more  
Saue that he sighed right wonderly soze  
And softly to hez right thus sayde he  
Mercy and that ye discouez nat me



## The Marchauntes Tale

For I am dede if that this thing be hyd  
This byl had she in her bosom hyd  
And wente her wey ye get nomore of me  
Vnto January comyn there is she  
And on his beddes syde sat ful softe  
He takith her and kyssith her ful oft  
He leyde him down to slepe and that anone  
She feyned her as that she must gone  
There as ye wote euery wight must nede  
And whan she of this bylle hath take hede  
She rente it alle to cloutes and at the last  
In the pryue softly she hath it cast  
Who studieth now but fayre fresshe may  
And down by olde January she lay  
That slept tyl the colowgh hath him awaked  
Anone he prayed her to stripe her naked  
He wolde of her he sayde haue somple saunce  
He sayde her clothes dyd him encumbraunce  
And she obeyeth be she leef or tothe  
But lest that precions folke with me be wrothe  
Hon that he wrought I dar you nat telle  
Or whether her thought it paradise or helle  
But I lette them wirche in their wise  
Tyl euyn song and that they must aryse  
Were it by destyne or by auenture  
Were it by influence or by nature  
Or constillacioun that in suche a state  
The heuyn stode that tyme fortunat  
Was for to put a byl in venus werkes  
For alle thing hath tyme as sayen clerkes  
To any woman for to gete her loue  
I can nat say but the grete god aboue  
That knowith that none acte is causeles

## The Marchauntes Tale

He demeth al for I Wyl holde my pease  
But soth it is hou that this fresshe may  
Hath take suche impressioun that day  
Of pyte of this seke man Dampayn  
That fro her hert she it dryue ne can  
The remembraunce for to do him ease  
Certayn thought she whom this thing displease  
Here reche nat I him assure  
To loue him best of any creature  
Though he nomore hadde than his shert  
So pyte rynneth sone in gentyl herte  
Here may ye here hou excellent fraunchise  
In women is whan they them narowe auyse  
Some tyrannt ther is as ther be many one  
That hath an herte as hard as any stone  
Whiche wolde haue let him sterue in the place  
Wele rather than haue graunted him grace  
And them reioy sen in theire cruel pryde  
And reched nat to be an homycyde  
This gentyl may fulfilled of al pyte  
Ryght so of her honde a lettre made she  
In whiche she graunted him her berzy grace  
Ther lackith nought but only day and space  
Where that she myght to his lust suffise  
For it shal be right as he wol denyse  
And whan she sawe her tyme vpon a daye  
To visyte this Dampayn goth this fresshe may  
And subtelly a lettre down she thriste  
Vndre his pylowe rede it if him lyst  
She takith him by the honde and herd him twyst  
So secretly that noman it wyste  
And badde him be alle hole and forth she went  
To January whan that he for her sent



## The Marchauntes Tale

Up riseth dampan the next morowe  
Al passed was his sekenes and his sorowe  
He hem bith him and proyneth him and pykith  
He doth al that his lady lust and liketh  
And eke to January he goth as lowe  
As euir dyd a dogge for the bowe  
He is so plesant to euery man  
For craft is alle who so that it can  
That euery wight is fayne to speke him gode  
And fully in the ladies grace he stode  
Thus let I dampan aboute his nede  
And in my tale forth I wyl procede  
Some clerkes holden that felycite  
Stondith in delyte and therfore certayn he  
This noble January with alle his myght  
In honest wise as longith to a knyght  
Shope him to lyue ful delicionly  
His housyng his arrape as honestly  
To his degre was made as a kynge  
Among othez of his honest thinges  
He hadde a gardeyn walled alle with stone  
So fapre a gardeyne wote I nowhere none  
For oute of doute I verily suppose  
That he that wrote the romaynes of the Rose  
Ne coude of it the beaute wele deuyse  
Ne priapus ne myght nat suffise  
Though he be god of gardeyns for to telle  
The beaute of the gardyn and the welle  
That stode vndre a laurez alwey grene  
Ful oft tyme king plato and his quene  
Proserpyna and alle her feyrye  
Disporten them and make melodye  
Aboute that welle and daunsed as men tolde

## The Marchauntes Tale

This noble knyght this January the olde  
Suche deynthe hath in it to walke and to pley  
That he wolde suffre no wight to bere the key  
Saue he him selue for of the smale wyket  
He bare alwey of syluer a clyket  
With the whiche whan he lyst vnshytte  
And whan he wolde paye his wif his dette  
In some season thider wolde he go  
And may his wif and no wight but they two  
And thinges that were nat do a bedde  
He in the gardeyn parfourned it and sped  
And in this wise many a mery day  
Pyuen this January and fresshe may  
But worldly ioye may nat alwey endure  
To January ne no worldly creature  
Whodden hadde o thou fortune vnstable  
Pyke vnto the scorpyon so deceyuable  
That flaterst with thy hede when thou wilt styng  
Thy tayle is deth throughe thy enuynmyng  
Whodden hadde o thou suete popson queynthe  
Whodden hadde o thou monster that subtelly canst peynthe  
Thy giftes vndre he we of stedfastnes  
That thou deceyuest bothe more and lesse  
Why hast thou January thus deceyued  
That haddest him for thy frende rescyued  
And now thou hast beraft bothe his eyen  
For sorowe of whiche he desireth to dyen  
Alas this January that is so fre  
Amyd his lust and his prosperite  
Is now woxen blynde and that al sodenly  
He wepeth and he wayleth pytously  
And therewithalle the fyre of jelousye  
Rest that his wif shalle fal in some folye



## The Sparchauntes Tale

So brent his hert that he wolde fayne  
That some man bothe him and her hadde slayne  
For neuiz after his deth ne his lyf  
Ne wolde he that she were loue ne wyf  
But euirlyue as a widowe in clothes blaue  
Sool as the turtyl that hath lost her make  
But at the last after a moneth or twey  
His sorowe gan to swage soth to sey  
For he wist it may none othez be  
He paciently toke his aduersite  
Saue oute of doute may he nat forgoon  
That he ne was ielous euir more in oon  
Whiche ielousye it was so outrageous  
That neither in halles ne in othez hous  
Ne in none othez place neuiz the moo  
He wolde suffre her for to ryde ne go  
But if that he hadde honde on her alwey  
For whiche ful ofte wepyth fresshe may  
That loueth Dampayn so tenderly  
That she must othez dye sodenly  
Or elles she must haue him at her leste  
She wayteth whan her hert wolde to brest  
Vpon that othez syde this dampayn  
Becomen is the sorowfullest man  
That euir was for neither nyght ne day  
Ne myght he speke a worde with fresshe may  
As of his purpos of none suche matere  
But if that January must it here  
That hadde an honde vpon her euir mo'  
But neuirthelesse by writyng to and fro  
And pryue signes wist he what she ment  
And she knewe of the same his entent  
O January what myght it the auayle

## The Marchauntes Tale

Though thou myghtyst se as fer as ship doth sayle  
For as gode blynde is deceyued to be  
As to be deceyued whan a man may se  
So argus whiche that hadde an hundreth eyn  
For al that euir he coude poure or pryen  
yet was he blent and god wote so be mo  
That wenyn wele that it is no thing so  
Passe ouir this and ease I say nomore  
This freshe map of whiche I spake of yore  
In warm wex hath prentyd this clyket  
That January haaz of the smale wyket  
By whiche vnto his gardeyn oft he went  
And Dampayn that knewe her entent  
The clyket countrefetyd pryuely  
There is nomore to say but hastely  
Some wondre by this clyket shal be tyde  
Whiche ye shal here if ye wyl abyde  
O noble oupde soth sayest thou god wote  
What sight it is though it be long and hote  
That he nyl fynde it oute in some manere  
By prymus and tysby may men here  
Though they were kept streyt long ouir alle  
They been accorded rownyng throughe a walke  
There no wight coude haue founde suche a sight  
But now to purpos or that daies eyght  
Were passed or the moneth of Iul befylle  
That January hath caught so grete a wyll  
Throughe eggyng of his wif him for to pley  
In his gardeyn and no wight but they twey  
That in a morowe vnto this may sayde he  
Ryse by my wif my loue my lady fre  
The turteles boyce I herd my spouse swete  
The wynter is gone with his raynes wete



## The Marchauntes Tale

Come forth With thyne eyen columbyne  
Now fayrer been thy eyen than is Wyne  
The gardeyne is closed al aboute  
Come forth my swete spouse oute of doute  
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte o Wyf  
No spot of the ne kene we þin al my lyf  
Come forth and let vs take oure disporte  
I chees the for my Wyf and for my comforte  
Suche olde lewde wordes vsed he  
On dampen a signe made she  
That he sholde go bi forne With his clerk  
This Dampen hath opned the Wyket  
And in he stert and that in suche manere  
That no Wight myght it see ne here  
And styll he sat vnder a busshe anone  
This January is blynde as is a stone  
With may in his honde and no Wight moo  
In to this freshe gardeyn is he goo  
And clapped to the Wyket sodenly  
Now wif quod he here nys but thou and I  
That art the creature that I best loue  
For by that lord that sytteth vs al aboue  
I hadde leuyd right now we dye on a knyf  
Than the offenden myn owne dere Wyf  
For goddes sake thynke thou I the chese  
Nat for couetyse ne othez gode doutles  
But only for the loue I hadde to the  
And though that I be olde and may nat se  
Be to me trewe and I wyl tel the why  
Certes thre thinges shulde ye Wynne therby  
First loue of crist and to youre selue honoure  
And alle myn heritage bothe toun and toure  
I geue it you makith charters as you lyst

## The Marchauntes Tale

This shal be do to morowe or the sonne riste  
So wisely god my soule brynge to blys  
And I pray you of couenaunt ye me kyss  
And though I be ielous wyte me nought  
ye be so depe prynced in my thought  
That whan I conside youre beaute  
And therewith al the vntyke eld of me  
I may nat certes though I shulde dye  
Forbere to been oute of youre companye  
For berry loue this is withouten doute  
Now kyss me wyf and let vs roume aboute  
This fresshe may whan she the wordes herde  
Benygne to January aunswerde  
But first and forward she began to wepe  
I haue quod she a soule for to kepe  
As wele as ye and also my honoure  
And of my wyfhode that tendre floure  
Whiche that I haue assured in youre honde  
Whan that the preest to you my body bonde  
Wherfore I wyl aunswere in this manere  
With the leue of you my lord so dere  
I pray to god that neuiz dawbe that day  
That I ne sterue as foule as woman may  
If euir I do to my kynne that shame  
Or elles that I empeyre so my name  
That I be fals and if I do that lacke  
Do stripe me and put me in a sache  
And in the next ryuer do me drenche  
I am a gentyl woman and no wyche  
Why speke ye thus but men be euir vntreue  
And women haue reproof of you ay ne we  
ye can none othez comunycacioun I leue  
But speke to vs of Entrust and vs reprove



## The Marchauntes Tale

And with that worde she sawe where Dampayn  
Sat in a busshe and knele he began  
And with her fynghers signes made she  
That dampayn sholde clymbe vp on a tre  
That charged was with frute and so he went  
For verely he knewe al her entent  
And euery signe that she coude make  
Wele bet than January her owne make  
For in a lettre she hadde tolde him al  
Of this matere how he wirche shalle  
And thus I let him spt in the perpe  
And January with may roumpnyng mery

B Right was the sonne and blewe the firmament  
Phebus of golde doune his beames hath sent  
To gladen euery floure with his warmnesse  
He was that tyme in geminis as I gesse  
But lytel fro his declynacioun  
Of Cancer iouis exaltacioun  
And so it fyl in a bright morowe tyde  
That in the garden on the ferther syde  
Pluto that is king of the feyrre  
And many a lady in his company  
Following his wif the quene proserpyne  
Eche after othe right as any lyne  
Whiles that she gadred floures in a mede  
In claudyng pe may the stozres rede  
How in his gryfely carte he her sette  
This kynng of feyrre adoun him sette  
Upon a benche of turues fayre and grene  
And right anone sayde he thus to his quene  
My wif quod he thez may no witht say nay  
The experience so proueth it euery day  
The treason whiche that women do to man

## The Marchantes Tale

Ten hundreth thousand tellen I can  
Examples and of youre vntrouthe & Brotylnesse  
O Salamon wise and richest of alle richesse  
Fulfilled of sapience and of worldly glory  
Wele worthy be thy wordes in memory  
To euery wight that wyt and reason can  
Thus pryseth he yet the bounte of man  
Among a thousand men yet fonde I one  
But of alle women yet fonde he neuir none  
Thus sayd the king that so knowith your wikednes  
And Iesus filius Sirach as I gesse  
He spekith of you but seldyn reuerence  
A wyfde fyre and a corrupte pestilence  
So falle on youre bodies yet to nyght  
He sepe nat this honourable knyght  
Bicause alas that he is blynde and olde  
His owne man shal make him cohercolde  
Po where he sitteth the lichoure in the tre  
Now wol I grannte of my mayestye  
Vnto this olde blynde worthy knyght  
That he shal haue agayn his eyen sight  
Whan that his wif wolde do him felony  
Than shal he knowe alle her herlotry  
Bothe in reproof of her and othez mo  
ye shal quod Proserpina and wil ye so  
Now by my modris soule sir I swere  
That I shal geue her sufficiant aunswere  
And al women after for her sake  
Though they be in any gilt y take  
With face bolde they shal thim selue excuse  
And bere him down that wolde them accuse  
For lacke of annswere none of them shal dyen  
Al hadde he seen a thing with bothe his eyen



## The Marchauntes Tale

yet shal we women so bisage it hardely  
And wepe and sweere and chide subtelly  
So that ye men shal be as lewde as gees  
What reckith me of youre auctoritees  
I wote wele this Iewe this Salamon  
Fonde of vs women mo foules than one  
But though he ne fonde no gode woman  
yet haue ther founde many a nother man  
women fulle true ful gode and vertuons  
Wytnes of them that duelle in cristes house  
With martyrdome they preuyd their constaunce  
The Romayne gestes eke make remembraunce  
Of many a very true wif also  
But sir ne be nat wrothe also  
Al though he sayde he fonde no gode woman  
I pray you take the sentence of the man  
He ment thus that in souerayne bounte  
Nys none but god that sitteth in trinyte  
By for very god that wys but one  
What make ye so moche of Salamone  
What though he made a temple goddes house  
What though he were riche and glorius  
So made he eke a temple of false goddes  
How myght he do a thing that more forhode is  
Parde as fayre as ye his name enplastre  
He was a lechoure and eke an ydolaastre  
And in his elde he very god forsoke  
And if god ne hadde as sayeth the boke  
yspared for his faders sake he sholde  
Haue lost his reigne rather than he wolde  
I yeue right nought of alle the belony  
That he of women writeth a butter slye  
I am a woman nedes I must speke

## The Marchantes Tale

Or elles swelle tyl my herte to breke  
For sithen ye say that we be iangelereffes  
As euir I mot broke hole my tresses  
I shal nat spare nowe for no curtesye  
To speke him harme that wolde vs belony  
Dame quod this pluto be ne lenger brothe  
I yene it bp but sithen I swere myn oth  
That a Wyl graunte him his sight ageyn  
My worde shal stonde I say you certayn  
I am a kynng it sytteth me nat to lye  
And I a quene quod she of the feyrre  
Her aunswere shal she haue I vnder take  
Let vs no moo wordes herof make  
For soth I Wyl you no lenger contrary  
Now let vs turne agayn to January  
That in the gardeyn with his freshe may  
Syngeth ful merper than the popyngeay  
you loue I best and shal and othez none  
So longt aboute the aleys is he gone  
Tyl he was come agenst that ilke pery  
Where as this Dampayn sytteth ful mery  
And high amongt the freshe leups grene  
This freshe may that is so bright and shene  
Can for to sigh and sayde allas my syde  
Now sir quod she for aught that may betyde  
I must haue of the perys that I se  
Or I must dye so soze longith me  
To ete of the smale perys grene  
Helpe for her loue that is of heuyn quene  
I telle you wele a woman in my plyte  
May haue in frute so grete an appetyte  
That she may dye but she of it haue  
Allas quod he that I ne hadde here a knaue



## The Marchauntes Tale

That coude clymbe allas allas quod he  
But I am blynde ye sir no force quod she  
But wolde ye bouchsauf for goddes sake  
The pery within youre armes for to take  
For wele I wote that ye mystrust me  
Than sholde I clymbe wele ynough quod she  
So I my fete myght set vpon youre bake  
Certes quod he therof shal be nolake  
Myght I you helppyn with my herte blode  
He stoupith down and on his bake she stode  
And caught her by a twistte and by she gothe  
Ladies I pray you be nat wrothe  
I can nat glose I am a rude man  
And sodenly anone this dampan  
Gan pulle vp the smoke and in he throny  
And whan that pluto sa we that wrong  
To January paue aye his sight  
And made him se as wele as euir he myght  
And when that he had caught his sight agayn  
He was no man of thing so fayne  
But on his wif his thought was euir mo  
Up to the tre he castith his eyen two  
And sa we how dampan his wif hath dressed  
In suche maner it may nat be expressed  
But if I wolde speke vncurtlesly  
Dute helpe allas harzowe he gan crye  
O stronge lady hoze what dost thou  
And she aunswered sir what ayleth you  
Haue pacience and reason in youre mynde  
I haue you holpen of bothe youre eyen blynde  
Up perel of my soule I shalle nat lien  
As me was taught to hele with youre eyen  
Was no thing bette to make you to se

## The Marchantes Tale

Than for to strottyl With a man in a tre  
God wote I dyd it in ful gode entent  
Strottyl quod he. ye algate in it went  
God yeue you bothe a shampys deth to dyen  
He dyd right so I sawe it With myn eyen  
And elles I be hantged by the hals  
Than is quod she my medicyne fals  
For certaynly if ye myght see  
ye wolde nat say these wordes to me  
ye haue some glemysyng and no perfyte sight  
I se quod he as wele as euiz I myght  
Thanked be god With both myn eyen two  
And by my trouthe me thought he dyd so  
ye maas gode syz quod she  
This thanke haue I for I made you see  
Allas quod she that euiz I was so kynde  
Now dame quod he lat al passe oute of mynde  
Come doune my leef and if I haue myssayde  
God helpe me so as I am euyl apayed  
But by my fadre soule I went haue seyn  
How that this dampayn hadde by the leyn  
And that thy smoke he leyde bpon his breest  
ye sir quod she ye may wene as ye lest  
But sir quod she a man that wakith of his slepe  
He may nat so sodenly take hepe  
Upon a thing ne se it so parfytly  
Tyl that he be wele adawed berply  
Right so a man that longt blynde hath be  
Ne may nat sodenly so sone wele se  
First whan his sight is comyn agayne  
As he that hath a day or tweyne y seyn  
Tyl that poure sight y satelyd be a while  
Ther may ful many a sight you begyle



## The Marchauntes Tale

Be waar I pray you for by heuyn king  
Fulle many a man wenyth to se a thing  
And yet it is al another than it semeth  
He that mysconcepueth oft mysdemeth  
And with that worde she lepte fro the tre  
This January who is gladde but he  
He hyssith her and clepith her fulle oft  
And on her wombe he strikith her ful soft  
And to his paleys home he hath her ladde  
Now gode men I pray you be mery and gladde  
Thus endith here my tale of January  
God blisse be alle and his modre Mary

Here endith the marchauntes tale  
And folowith the Squyers prologue

O Oure hoost in his stioppes stondith anone  
And sayde godemen herkneth euerichone  
This was a sharpe tale for the nones  
Siz parisse preest quod he for goddes bones  
Tel be a tale as was thy for ward pore  
I se wele that laboured men inlore  
Knowe moche thing by goddes dignyte  
The parson him aunswerd benedicite  
What ayleth the man so sinfully to sweere  
Oure hoost aunswerde o Jankyn be ye there  
I smelle a lollere in the wynde quod he  
Now gode men quod oure hoost herkneth me  
Abydith for goddes diggne passioun  
For we shal haue now a predicacioun  
This lollare wyl preche be here somwhat  
May by my fadre soule that shal he nat  
Sayde the Squyer, he shal nat here preche

## The Squyers Prologue

He shal no gospel glose here ne teche  
We leue al in the grette god quod he  
He wolde soue som difficulte  
Of spryngyn cokyl in oure clene corn  
And therfore hoost I warne the biforn  
My ioly body shal a tale telle  
And I shal clynke you a ioly belle  
That it shal wakyn alle this company  
But it shal nat be of philosophy  
Ne of physicas ne termes queynte of lawe  
There is but lytel latyn in my ma we

Here endith the squyers prologue  
And here begynneth his Tale



a T surrpe in the sonde of Tartary  
There duelled a king that warred russe  
Throught which ther dyed many a doughty man



## The Squyers Tale

That noble kyng was clepyd Cambuscan  
Whiche in his tyme was of so grete renoun  
That ther was nowhere in no regioun  
So excellent a lorde an alle thing  
He lacked naught that longed to a kyng  
As of the secte of whiche he was born  
He kepte his lay to whiche he was sworne  
And therto he was hardy wise and riche  
Pytous iust and alwey pelyche  
Soth of his worde benygne and honourable  
Of his coratge as any center stable  
yong fresshe strong in armes desirous  
As any bachelez duelling in his house  
A fayre persone he was and fortunate  
And kept alwey so wele ryalle estate  
That there was nowhere suche a man  
This noble kyng this tartyr Cambuscan  
He hadde two sonnes on alpheite his wyf  
Of whiche the eldest hight Algarsyf  
That othez sonne was cleped camballo  
A doughter hadde this worthy king also  
That yongest was and hight Canace  
But for to telle you of her beaute  
It lyth nat in my tonge ne in my connyng  
I dar nat take on me so high a thing  
And also myn englysshe eke is insufficient  
It must be a clerke and a rethour excellent  
That knewe the coloures longyng to that arte  
If I sholde discriue her in every parte  
I am no suche I must speke as I can  
And so besyl this cambuscan  
Hath twenty wynter born his dyademe  
As he went fro yere to yere y deme

## The Squyers Tale

Be leet the feste of his natiuyte  
Done cry throughe oute Saray the cyte  
The last Idus of Marche after the yere  
Phebus the sonne fulioly was and clere  
For he was nygh his exaltacioun  
In martis face and in his mansioun  
In aries the hote colerpe signe  
Ful lusty was the wether and benygne  
For whiche the foules ayenst the sonne shen  
What for the season and the yong grene  
Ful loude songe theire affectionous  
Them semed to gettyn them protectiouns  
Ayenst the swerde of Wynter hene and colde  
This cambuscan of whiche I you tolde  
In ryalle bestmentes sat on his deys  
With dyademe ful high in his paleys  
And helde his fest so solempne and riche  
That in this worlde was there none it like  
Of whiche if I sholde tel al the aray  
Than wolde it occuppe a someres day  
And eke it nedith nat to deuyse  
At euery cours the ordre of theire seruyse  
I wol nat telle of theire straunge se wys  
Ne of theire swannys ne of theire heronsewes  
Eke in that londe as tellen knyghtes olde  
Is some mete that is ful deynste holde  
That in this londe men reche of it but smalle  
There is no man that may reporten alle  
I wol nat tary for it is pryme  
And for it is no frute but losse of tyme  
Vnto my first tale I wol haue my recours  
And so besyl that after the thridde cours  
While this knyng sat thus in his noble ye



## The Squyers Tale

Her kynnyng his mynstralles theire thinges pley  
Bifore him at his borde deliciously  
In at the halle dore al sodenly  
There cam a knyght vpon a stede of brasse  
And in his honde a brode myrroure of glas  
Vpon his thombe he hadde of golde a ryng  
And by his syde a naked swerde hanging  
And by he rydeth to the high borde  
In al the halle ne was there spoke a worde  
For meruayle of this knyght him to beholde  
And bisely they wayten yong and olde  
The straunge knyght that cam so sodenly  
Al armed saue his hede ful richely  
Salueth kyng quene and lordes alle  
By ordre as they sytten in the halle  
With so high reuerence and obeyssaunce  
As wele in speche as in countenaunce  
That Gaueyn with his olde curtesye  
Though he were come agayn oute of fayrye  
Ne coude him amende with a worde  
And after this bifore the high borde  
He with manly voyce sayde his messagge  
After the fourme vsed in his langage  
Withoute byce of syllable or lettre  
And for his tale shulde seme the bettre  
Accordaunt to his wordes was his chere  
As techith arte of speche them that it lere  
Al be it that I can nat founde his style  
Ne I can nat clymbe on so high a stile  
Than say I thus to the comon entent  
Thus moche amounteth alle that he ment  
If it so be that I haue it in mynde  
He sayde the kyng of azabye and of ynde

## The Squyers Tale

My lichte lordc on this solempne day  
Saluyth you as he best can and may  
And sendith you honoure at youre fest  
By me that am al redy at youre hest  
This stede of brasse that easily and wele  
Can in the space of a day naturel  
This is to say in foure and twenty houres  
Where you lyst in droughte or in shoures  
Bere youre body into euery place  
To whiche youre herte wryneth for to pase  
Withoute wem of you through foule or fayre  
Or if you lyst to fle as high in the eyre  
As doth an eagle whan him lyst to soze  
This same stede shal bere you euir more  
Withoute harme tyl ye be there ye lyst  
Though that ye slepe on his backe or rest  
And turne agayn with wryng of a pyn  
He that it wrought coude many a gyn  
He wayted many a constellacioun  
Or that he hadde wrought his operacioun  
And knewe many a seale and many a bonde  
This myrroure eke that I haue in myn honde  
Hath suche a myght that men may in it se  
Whan thez shal falle any aduersite  
Vnto youre reigne or vnto youre selue also  
And openly who is youre frende or foo  
And ouiz al this if any lady bright  
Had set her hert on any maner knyght  
Of he be fals she shal his treason se  
His newe loue and alle his subteltye  
So openly that ther shal no thing hyde  
Wherfore ayenst this lusty somers tyde  
This myrroure and this ryng as ye may se



## The Squyers Tale

He sent hath to my lady Tenace  
youre excellent doughter that is here  
The vertue of this ryng if ye wol here  
Is this. if that it lyst her for to were  
Upon her thombe or in her purse it bere  
There is no foule that fleeth vndre heuyn  
That she ne shalle vnderstonde his steuyn  
And knowe his menyng openly and playn  
And aunswere him in his langage agayn  
And euery gras that growith vpon the rote  
She shal knowe and whom it wol do bote  
Al be his wounde neuiz sodepe or wyde  
This naked swerd that hangith by my syde  
Suche vertue hath that what man ye smyte  
Through oute his armure it wol herue and byte  
Were it as thicke as a braunched oke  
And what man is wounded with the stroke  
He shalle neuiz be hole tyl ye list of grace  
To stryke him with the platte in the same place  
There he is hurt that is as mekyl to sayn  
ye must with the plat swerde agayn  
Stryke him in the wounde and it wol close  
This is verzy soth withouten glose  
It fayleth nat whiles it is in youre holde  
And whan the knyght hadde thus his tale tolde  
He rode oute of the halle and down he light  
His stede whiche that shone as the sonne bright  
Stondith in the courte styll as any stone  
This knyght into the chambre is led anone  
And is vnarmed and to mete y sette  
The presentes be right richely sette  
This is to say the swerd and the myrroure  
Been born anone to the high toure

## The Squyers Tale

With certayne officers demed therfore  
And vnto Canace this ryng is boze  
Solemnely there she sat at the table  
But sikerly withouten any fable  
The horse of bras that may nat be remeuyd  
It stont as it were in the grounde y cleuyd  
They may it nat oute of the place dryue  
For none entynes wyndas ne polpye  
And cause why for they can nat the craft  
And therfore in the place they haue it last  
Tyl that the knyght haue taught them the ma  
To boyden him as ye shal after here  
Grete was the prees that swermyd to and fro  
To ga wren on the horse that stode so  
For it so hight was so brode and so long  
So wele proporcioned to be strong  
Right as it were a stede of lumbardy  
Ther with so horsely and so quych at eye  
As it a gentyl poleyn courser were  
For certes fro his tayle vnto his ere  
Nature ne arte coude him nat amende  
In no degre as alle the people wende  
But euirmore theire moost wondre was  
How it coude go and was of bras  
It was a fayre as al the people semed  
Dyuerse folke dyuersly they demed  
As many hedes as many wyttes ther been  
They mozmyd as doth a swarme of been  
And maken shylles after theire fantesye  
Rehersyng of the olde poetrye  
And sayde it was lyke the pettase  
The horse that hadde wynges for to fle  
Or elles it was the grekes horse Synon



## The Squyers Tale

That brought trope into destruction  
As men in olde gestes rede  
Myghtert quod one is euer more in drede  
I trowe som men of armes be therein  
That shapen them this cyte for to wyne  
It were right gode that alle suche thinge were knowe  
Another rowned to his felawe lowe  
And sayde he lyed for it was rather lyke  
An apparence made by som magyke  
As ioglours pleyen at the festes grete  
Of sondry doutes they iangel and trete  
Aslewe people deme alday comonly  
Of thinges that been made more subtelly  
Than they can in theire lewdnesse comprehend  
They demen gladly to the badde ende  
And som of them wondred on the myrrour  
That boyn was by in the mayster toure  
How men myght in it suche thinges se  
An othe aunsweerd and sayde it myght wele be  
Naturally made by composiciouns  
Of aungels and of sly reflectiouns  
And sayde that in rome was suche one  
They spake of aloce and of bytelone  
And of aristotle that writen in theire lyues  
Of queynte myrrours and of prospectatyues  
As knowe they that haue theire bokes herde  
And othe folke haue wondred on the swerd  
That wol perysse through euery thing  
And felle in speche of thelephus the king  
And of achilles with his queynte spere  
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere  
Right in suche wise as men may with the swerde  
Of whiche right now we ye haue poure selue herd

## The Squyers Tale

They speken of sondry hardyng of metal  
And speken of medicynes therwithalle  
And hou and whan it sholde hardyd be  
Whiche bnhnowe is algate to me  
Tho speke they than of Canaces ryng  
And sayde that al suche wondre thing  
Of craft of rynges herde they neuir noon  
Saue that he moyse and king Salamon  
Hadde a maner connyng of suche an arte  
Thus sayn the people and drawen them a parte  
But neuirtheles som sayde that it was  
Wondez to make of fern asshes glas  
And yet is glas nat lyke asshe of fern  
But for they haue knowe it so fern  
Therfore sesith thez ianglyng and thez wondre  
As soze wondre some on cause of the thundre  
On ebbe and floode on gossomer and on myst  
And on alle thing tyl the cause is wist  
Thus iangel they and demyn and deuyse  
Tyl that the kyng kan from his borde aryse  
Phebus hath lost the angle merydional  
And yet ascendyng was the best ryalle  
The gentyl poun with his aldryan  
Whan that this tartyr kyng Cambuscan  
Rose from his borde there he sat ful hye  
Biforn him goth the loude mynstralcye  
Tyl that he cam to his chambre of paramentes  
There as they sownyn dyuers instrumentes  
That is lyke an heyn for to here  
Now daunsen lusty Venus children dere  
For in the fyssh theire lady sat ful hye  
And loked on them with a frendly eye  
Tyl the noble kyng is set vpon his trone



## The Squyers Tale

This straunght knyght is fet to him ful sone  
And on the daunce goth With Tanace  
Here is the reuel and the iolyte  
That is nat able a dul man to deuyse  
He must haue knowe loue and his seruyse  
And be a festliche man as fresshe as may  
That shal you deuysen suche arzap  
Who coude you telle the fourme of daunses  
So vncouth and so fresshe contenaunces  
Suche subtel lokynge and dissymlynge  
For drede of ielousye mennys perseyuynge  
No man but Launcelot and he is dede  
Therfore I passe ouir of al this lusty hede  
I say no more but in this iolynesse  
I lete them tyl men to souper them dresse  
The steward biddyth spices for to hve  
Andeke the wyne in alle this melodye  
The vsshers and the squyers been gone  
The spyces and the wyne is comen anone  
They ete and drynke and whan this was at ende  
Vnto the temple as reason was they wende  
The seruyce done they soupen al by day  
What nedith me to reherse theire arzap  
Eche man wote wele that a kynge's fest  
Hath plente to the moost and to the lest  
And deyntes mo than be in my knowynge  
And after souper goth this noble kynge  
To se this horse of brasse with alle the route  
Of lordes and of ladies him aboute  
Suche wondryng was there of this horse of bras  
That sithen the grette sege of trope was  
There as men sawe suche an horse also  
Ne was there suche wondryng as was tho

But fynally the king asked the knyght  
 The vertue of this courser and the myght  
 And prayed to telle him his gouernaunce  
 The horse anone gan to trippe and daunce  
 Whan that this knyght leyde honde on his rayne  
 And sayde sir ther is nomore to sayne  
 But whan you lyst to ryde any where  
 ye must trylle a pyn that stont in his ere  
 Whiche I shalle you telle bit wyys two  
 ye must name him to what place also  
 Or to what countre that ye lyst to ryde  
 And whan ye come there ye lyst abyde  
 Byd him discende and trylle another pyn  
 For therin lyth the effecte of alle the gyn  
 And he wol down descende and do youre wyl  
 And in that place he wol abyde styll  
 Though alle the worlde hath the contrary swore  
 He shal nat thens be drawe ne bore  
 And or if you lyst bydde him thens gone  
 Tryl this pyn and he wol banysse anone  
 Oute of the sight of euery maner wight  
 And come agayn be it by day or nyght  
 Whan that you clepyn him agayn  
 In suche a gyse as I shal to you sayn  
 Bit wene you and me and that right sone  
 Ryde whan ye lyst there is nomore to done  
 Enfourmed whan the kyng was of the knyght  
 And hath conceyued in his wytte a right  
 The maner and the fourme of al this thing  
 Full gladd and blythe was this noble kyng  
 Repayryng vnto this reuel as bifore  
 The byrdel is to toure y born  
 And kept among his Jewelles leef and dere



## The Squyers Tale

The horse banysshed I not in what manere  
Dute of theire sight ye gete nomore of me  
But thus I let in lust and in tolyte  
This cambuscan his lordes festeyng  
Tyl nyght the day began to spryngte

Explicit prima pars  
Et sequitur pars secunda

t He nozpyce of digestion the sleep  
Gan on them Wynke and badde them take hepe  
That moche mete and laboure Wyl haue rest  
And with a gappyng mouth he them al byst  
And sayde it was tyme to lye adoun  
For blode was in his domynacionn  
Cherisse blode natures frendes quod he  
They thanken him galpyngte by two by thre  
And euery wight gan draue him to his rest  
As sleep them badde and take it for the best  
Theire dremes shal nat be tolde for me  
Ful were theire hedes of fumosite  
That causith dreame of whiche ther is no charyte  
They sleppyn tyl it was pryme lartge  
The moost parte but if it were Canace  
She was ful mesurable as women be  
For of her fadre hath she take her leue  
To go to rest sone after it was eue  
Herlyst nat apalled for to be  
Ne on the morowe vnfestliche for to see  
And slept her first slepe and awoke  
For suche ioye she in her myrzoure toke  
Bothe of her ryng and of her myrzoure  
That twenty tyme she chaunged coloure

## The Squyers Tale

And in her sleep for the impressioun  
Of her myrroure she hadde a visyoun  
Wherefore or the sonne gan byglyde  
She clepyd her maystresse her beside  
And sayde that her lust for to aryse  
These olde woman that been gladly wise  
As her maystesse answered her anon  
And sayde madame whether wol ye gone  
Thus arely for folke been alle in reste  
I wol quod she aryse for me leste  
No lengere slepe but walke aboute  
Her maystresse clepith women a grete route  
And by they ryse wele ten or twelue  
Up riseth freshe Canace her selue  
As rody and bright as the yong sonne  
That in the ram is foure degrees yronne  
No higher was he whan she redy was  
And forth she walkith easely a paas  
Arayed after the lusty season sote  
Pyghtly for to pley and walke on fote  
Nat but with fyue or syxe of her menye  
And in a trence forth in the parke goth she  
The vapoure whiche fro the erthe glode  
Makith the sonne to seme rody and brode  
But neuirthelesse it was fayre of sight  
That it made alle their hertes for to light  
What for the season and the moornyng  
And for the foules that she herde syng  
For right anon she wist what they ment  
Right by their song and knewe al their entent  
The knotte why that every tale is tolde  
If it be tarped tyl the lust be colde  
Of them that haue it herked after yore



## The Squyers Tale

The sauoure passith and euir lenger the more  
For folsomnes of his prolixite  
And by the same reason thinkith me  
I sholde vnto the knotte condescende  
And make of her walkyng sone an ende  
A mydde a treford reyde as white as chalke  
As Canace was pleyng in her walke  
Ther sat a faucon ouer her hede ful hye  
That with a pytous voyce she gan to crye  
That al the wode resounded of her crye  
And beten hadde her selue so pyton sty  
With both her wynges tyl the rede blode  
Ran endlong the tre there as she stode  
And euir in one she cryed alwey and shryste  
And with her beke her selue to twyght  
That ther nas tygre nor so cruelle best  
That duellith othez in wode or in forrest  
That nolde haue wepte if he wepe coude  
For sorowe of her shryste alwey soloude  
For ther was neuir yet man on lyue  
If that he coude a faucon wele discryue  
That herde of suche a nothez of feynesse  
As wele of plumage as of gentylnesse  
Of shappe and alle that myght rekned be  
A faucon perettryne than semed she  
Of fremde londe and euir more as she stode  
She swouned now and now for lache of blode  
Tyl wele nyght is she fallen fro the tre  
This fayre kynges doughter Canace  
That on her synges bare the queynte ryng  
Throughe whiche she vnderstode wele euery thing  
That any foule may in his leden sayn  
And coude aunswere in his leden agayn

## The Squyers Tale

Bath vnderstonde what this faucon seyde  
And wele nygh for the routh the almoost she deyde  
And to the tre she goth ful hastely  
And on this faucon loketh ful pytously  
And helde her lappe abrode for wele she wist  
The faucon must falle fro the twyst  
Whan that it swounded next for lache of blode  
Alonge while to wayte there she stode  
Tyl at the last she spake in this manere  
Vnto the hawke as ye shal after here  
What is the cause if it be for to telle  
That ye be in this furpal peyne of helle  
Quod canace vnto this hauke aboue  
Is this sorowe of deth or losse of loue  
For as I trowe these been the causes tuo  
That causen moost a gentyl hert wo  
Of othez harme it rekkith nat to speke  
For ye poure selue bpon poure self ye wreke  
Whiche preynt wele that othez loue or drede  
Must be encheson of poure cruel dede  
Sithen that I se none othez wight you chace  
For loue of god so do poure self grace  
Or what may be poure helpe, for west ne east  
Saue I neuir or nowe byrde ne best  
That faryd with him selue so pytously  
Ye sle me with poure sorowe berply  
I haue of you so grete compassion  
For goddes loue come fro the tre adoun  
And as I am a kyniges doughter trewe  
If that I berply the causes knewe  
Of poure disease if it lay in my myght  
I wolde amende it or it were nyght  
As wys helpe me grete god of kynde



## The Squyers Tale

And herbes shalle I right ynough fynde  
To hele with youre hurtes hastely  
Tho shryght this faucon yet more pytously  
Than euir she dyd and fyl to grounde anone  
And lyth as wone as dede as any stone  
Tyl Canace hath in her lappe her take  
Vnto tyme she gan oute of her swoune awake  
And after that she oute of swoun gan brayde  
Right in her hawhes leden thus she sayde  
That pyte rynneth sone in gentyl herte  
Felyng his symplitude in peynes smert  
Is proued alday as men may se  
As wele by werke as by auctoryte  
For gentyl herte kyderth gentylnesse  
I se wele that ye haue of my distresse  
Compassioun my faire Canace  
Of very womanly benignyte  
That nature in youre pryncipales hath set  
But for no hope for to fare the bette  
But for to obeie to youre hert fre  
And for to make othez be ware by me  
As by the whelpes chasted is the lyoun  
Right for that cause and that conclusioun  
While that I haue leysur and space  
My harme I wyl confesse or I paas  
And euir while that one her sorowe tolde  
That othez wepte as she to water wolde  
Tyl that the faucon hadde her be styllle  
And with a sigh thus she sayde her wyllle  
There I was bred alas that hard day  
And fostryd in a roche of marble gray  
So tenderly that nothing apleth me  
I ne wylst what was aduersyte

## The Squyers Tale

Tyl I coude felye ful hygh vndre the shy  
Thoduelled a tarcelet me fast by  
That semed wel of alle gentylnesse  
Al were he ful of treason and falsnes  
It was so wrapped vndre humble chere  
And vndre hue of trouth in suche manere  
Vndre plesaunce and vndre besy peyne  
That I ne coude haue wende he coude fayne  
So depe in grene he dyed his coloures  
Ryght as a serpent hideth him vndre floures  
Tyl he may se his tyme for to byte  
Ryght so this god of loues ypocryte  
Doth so his serymones and his obersaunces  
And kepith in semblaunce of hys obseruaunces  
That so wneeth vnto gentynesse of loue  
As in a tombe is alle the fyer aboue  
And vndre is the corps suche as ye woot  
Suche was this ypocryte bothe colde and hote  
And in this wise he seruyd his entent  
That saue the feende none wist what he ment  
Tyl he so long hadde wept and compleyned  
And many a yere his seruyce vnto me feyned  
Tyl that my hert to pytous and to nyce  
Al innocent of his crowned malice  
For ferde of his deth as thought me  
Vpon his othes and his suretie  
Graunted him loue vpon this condicioun  
That euermo myn honoure and my renoun  
Were sauyd bothe pryue and aperte  
This is to sayn that after his deserte  
I gaue him alle my hert and alle my thought  
God wote and he and othez wise nought  
And toke his herte in chaunge of myn for ay



## The Squyers Tale

But sothe is sayde gone sith many a day  
A true wight and a theef thinke nat one  
And whan he sawe the thyng so fer agone  
That I hadde graunted him my loue  
In suche a gypse as I haue sayde aboue  
And geue him my true herte as fre  
As he swore he gaue his herte to me  
Anone this tygre fulle of doublenesse  
Fyl on his knees with so grete humblenesse  
With high reuerence as by his chere  
Solpke a gentyl louez of manere  
So rauysshed as it semed for the ioye  
That neuiz troilus ne Paris of troye  
Jason certis ne none othe man  
Sithen Lameth was that al ther first began  
To louen two as writen folke biforn  
Ne neuiz sithen the first man was born  
Ne coude man by twenty thousand part  
Countrefete the sophymes of his arte  
Ne worthy to bnbokle his galoché  
There doublenesse or faynyng shold approche  
Ne so coude thanke a wight as he dyd me  
His maner was an heuyn for to se  
To any woman were she neuiz so wise  
So paynted he his chere at poynte deuyse  
As wele his wordes as his contaunce  
And so I loued him for his obaysaunce  
And for the trouthe ydemed in his hert  
That if so were that any thing him smert  
Al were it neuiz solpke and I it wyft  
Ne thought I felte deth at my hert t wyft  
And shortly so ferforth this thyng is went  
Tyl that my wyl is his wylis instrument

## The Squyers Tale

This is to seyn my Wyl obeyed to his Wille  
In alle thing as fer as reason fyl  
Kepyng the boundes of my worshippe euir  
Ne neuir hadde I thing so leef ne leue  
As him god wote ne neuir shal noma  
This lastydenger than a yere or two  
That I supposed of him nothing but gode  
But fynally thus at the last it stode  
That fortune wolde that he must twayne  
Dute of that place whiche I was in  
Where me was woo it is no questoun  
I can nat make of it discripcioun  
For one thyng dar I telle boldly  
I knowe what the peyne of dethe is therby  
Suche harme I fet that he ne myght beleue  
So on a day of me he toke his leue  
So sorowfully eke that he wende verily  
That he hadde felt as moche sorowe as I  
Whan that I herde him speke and sawe his hewe  
But neuirtheles I thought he was so trewe  
And eke that he repayre sholde agayne  
Within a lytel while sothe to sayne  
And reason wolde eke that he must go  
For his honoure and ofte it fallith so  
That I made vertue of necessity  
And toke it wele sithen it nedes must be  
As I best myght I hyd fro him my sorowe  
And toke him by the honde seint John to bozowe  
And sayde thus to I am poures alle  
Be ye suche as I haue be to you and shal  
What he aunswerd nedith nat to reherse  
Who can say bette than he that can do wers  
Whan hath he al sayde than hath he done



## The Squyers Tale

Therfore bihoueth him to haue a long sponne  
That shal ete with a feende thus herde I say  
So at the last he must forth his wey  
And forth fleeth tyl he come where he lyst  
Whan it cam him to purpos for to ryst  
I trowe he hadde the texte in mynde  
That al thing repayring to his kynde  
Gladith it selue thus say men as I gesse  
Men loue of proppr kynde newefanglenesse  
As byrdes done that men in cages fede  
For thogh thou nyght and day take of them hede  
And straue theire cage feyre and soft as silke  
And geue them sugere hony brede and mylke  
yet right anone as that his doore is by  
He with his feet spurneth doune his cuppe  
And to the wodde he wol and wormes ete  
So newefangyl been they of theire mete  
And loue noueltees of proppr kynde  
Noggentylnesse of blode may hem bynde  
So ferde this tarcellet allas the day  
Though he were gentyl born freshe and gay  
And godely for to se humble and free  
He saue by on a tyme a kyte flee  
And sodenly he louyd this kyte so  
That al his loue is clene fro me go  
And hath his trouthe falsed in this wise  
Thus hath the kyte my loue in his seruyse  
And I am loyn withoute remedye  
And with that worde this faucon gan to crye  
And swouned oft in Canaces harme  
Grette was the sorowe for the haukes harme  
That Canace and alle her women made  
They nyght hou they myght the faucon glade

## The Squyers Tale

But Canace home berith her in her lappe  
And softly in plasters gan her wrappe  
There as she with her beke hadde hurt her selue  
Now can nat Canace but herbes delue  
Dute of the grounde and make salues newe  
Of herbes fyne and fresshe of hewe  
To hele with the hauke fro day to nyght  
She doth her besynesse and al her myght  
And by her beddes hede she made a mewe  
And couered it with beluettes blewe  
In signe of trouthe that is in women seyn  
And al withoute the mewe is peynted grene  
In which were peynted al these false foules  
As been these tydifes tarcelles and oules  
Right for despyte were paynted her besyde  
Pyces on them to crye and to chide  
Thus lette I Canace her hauke hepynt  
I wol as now no more speke of her rynt  
Tyl it come eft to purpos for to sayn  
How that this faucon gat her loue agayne  
Repentyng as the story telleth us  
By mediacioun of Camballus  
The kynges sonne of whiche I you tolde  
But hens forth I wylle my processe holde  
To speken of auentures and batayles  
That yet was neuir herde so grete meruayles  
First I wyl you telle of Cambuscan  
That in his tyme many a cyte wan  
And after wol I speke of algarisf  
How that he wan theodora to his wyf  
For whom ful ofte in grete peryl he was  
Ne had he be holpyd by the hors f bras  
And after wol I speke of Camballo



## The Squyers Tale

That faught in lystes With Brethern two  
For Canace or that he myght her wyne  
And there I left I wyl agayne begynne

Explicit pars secunda  
Et incipit pars tercia

a pollo whryllith by his chare so high  
Tyl that god Mercurius house the flygh

There is nomore of the squyers tale

The wordes of the frankeleyn

i N fayth Squyer thou hast the wele y quytte  
And gentylly. I pryse wele thy wytte  
Quod the frankeleyn considryng thy yowthe  
So felynge thy spekest siȝ I allouthe  
As to my dome there nys none that is here  
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere  
If that thou lyue god gyue the right gode chaunce  
And in vertue sende the contynuaunce  
For of thy speche I haue right grete deynce  
I haue a sonne and by the trinite  
I hadde lyuer than twenty ponde worth londe  
Though it right nowe were fallen in my honde  
He were a man of suche discrecioun  
As that ye been fy on possessioun  
But if a man be vertuouse withalle  
I haue my sonne snybbed and yet shalle  
For he to vertue lysteth nat to attende  
But for to pley at dyce and dispende  
And lese alle that he hath in his vsage

## The frankleyns prologue

And he hadde leuez talken With a page  
Than to comyn Wight any gentyl Wight  
Where he myght lerne gentylnesse aright  
Strawe for youre gentylnesse quod tho oure hoost  
What frankelyn parde sir wele thou wotest  
That ech of you must telle at the lest  
A tale or two or breken his bihest  
That knowe I wele sir quod the frankelyn  
I pray you haue me nat in disdeyne  
Though to this man I speke a worde or two  
Telle on thy tale withoute wordes mo  
Gladly sir hoost quod he I wylle obeye  
Vnto youre wille. now herken what I say  
I wyl you nat contrary in no wise  
As fer as that my wytte wyl suffice  
I pray to god that it may please you  
Than wote I wele it is gode ynow

## Here begynneth the frankleyns prologue

t Hese olde gentyl brytons in theire daies  
Of dyuers auctours maden theire layes  
Rymed first in theire owne bryton tong  
Suche layes With theire instrumentes they song  
Drelles reddyn them for theire plesaunce  
And one of them haue I in remembraunce  
Whiche I shal say With a gode wyl as I can  
But sires bicause I am a bozel man  
At my begynnynge first I you beseeche  
Haue me excused of my rude speche  
I lernyd neuiz rethorpye in certayn  
Thynge that I speke must be bare and playne  
I slept neuiz in the mount of perna so



# The Frankleyns Tale

Ne lerned Marcus Tullius ne cithero  
Coloures knowe I none withouten drede  
But suche coloures as growen in the mede  
Or elles suche as men dven or peynthe  
Coloures of rethorpyke be to me queynthe  
My spiryte felith in no suche matere  
But and pe lyste my tale shalle ye here

Here endith the frankleyns prologue  
And here begynneth his tale



i In Armoryk that called is Brytayne  
Ther was a knyght that loued and dyd his peyne  
To serue ladies in his best wyse  
And many a labour and many a grette empyse  
He for his lady wrought or she was wonne  
For she was one the fayrest vndre sonne  
And eke therto compyn of so high kynred

## The Frankleyns Tale

That wele vnneeth durst the knyght for drede  
Tel her his woo his peyne and his distresse  
But at the last she for his worthynes  
And namely for his meke obeysaunce  
Hath suche appetyte caught of his penaunce  
That she pryncely fyl of his accomde  
To take him for her husbonde and her lord  
Of suche lordship as men haue ouer their wyues  
And for to lede in the more blisse their lyues  
Of his fre wille he swore her as a knyght  
That neuir in alle his lyf he day ne nyght  
Ne sholde vpon him take no mastrye  
Aynst her wyll ne kythe her ielousye  
But her obeye and folowe her wille in alle  
As any loue to his lady shal  
Saue that the name of soueraynte  
That wolde he haue for shame of his degre  
She thankyth him of his humblenesse  
She sayde sir sithen of youre gentylnesse  
Ye profer me to haue so large a reyne  
Ne wol god neuir bitwixe vs twayne  
As in my gylt were other warre or stryf  
Sir I wol be youre humble true wyf  
Haue here my trouthe tyl that my hert brest  
Thus been they bothe in quyet and in rest  
For one thyng sires sauely dar I say  
That frendes eueryche othe must obeye  
If they wyl lyue in pease and holde company  
Loue wyl nat be constreyned by maystrye  
Whan mastrye is come the god of loue anone  
Betith his wynges and fare wele he is gong  
Loue is a thyng as any thought free  
For women of kynde desiren liberte



## The Frankeleyns Tale

And nat to be constreynd as a thralle  
And so doth men if I the soth telle shal  
Loke who is moost pacient in loue  
He is at his auantage al aboue  
Paciencie is an high vertue certayne  
For it benquysshith as clerkes sayn  
Thynnges that rigoure shal neuiz atteyne  
For euery worde men may nat chide and pleyne  
Permyth to suffre oz elles so mot I gone  
ye shal it lerne whether so ye wyl oz uone  
For in this worlde certeyne no wight is  
That he ne doth oz sayeth somtyme amys  
Ore sekenes oz constyllacioun  
Wyne wo oz chaungyng of complexioun  
Causith fulle oft to do a mys oz speken  
On euery wrong a man may nat be wrethyn  
After the tyme must be temporaunce  
To euery wight that can of gouernaunce  
And therfore hath this wise worthy knyght  
Tolpuen in ease suffraunce her behight  
And she to him ful wisely gan swere  
That neuiz sholde there be defaute in here  
Here men may see in humble wise accorde  
Thus hath she take her seruaunt and her lord  
Seruaunt in loue and lord in mariage  
Than was he bothe in lordshippe and in seruage  
Seruage nay but in lordshippe aboue  
Sithen he hath both his lady and his loue  
His lady certis and his wyf also  
The whiche that la we and loue accorde therto  
And whan he was in this prosperyte  
Home with his wyf he goth to his countre  
Nat fer from penmarke there his duelling was

## The Frankeleyns Tale

Where as he lyueth in blisse and in solas  
Who coude telle but he that weded had be  
The ioye the ease and the prosperyte  
That is bitwyte an husbond and his wif  
A yere or more lestith this blisful lyf  
Tyl that this knyght of whiche I spake thus  
That of hayrude was clepyd Arueragus  
Shope him to gone and duelle a yere or twayne  
In englonde that clepyd was eke Britayne  
To seke in armes worshippe and honoure  
For alle his lust he set in suche labour  
And duelled there two yere the boke sayeth thus  
Now wol I stynt of this Arueragus  
And speke I wyl of Dorrygene his wyf  
That louyd her husbond as her hertes lyf  
For his absence wepith she and siketh  
As done these gode wyues whan they myketh  
She moornyth wakieth waylieth and playneth  
Desire of his presence so her distrayneth  
That alle this wyde worlde she set at naught  
Her frendes that knewe her heuy thought  
Conforren her in alle that euil they may  
They prechen her they teche her nyght and day  
That causeles she sterth her self allas  
And every comfort possible in that caas  
They do to her and alle their besynesse  
To auoyde her sorowe and her heynesse  
By processe as ye knowen everihone  
Men may solong graue in a stone  
Tyl some figure therein prynted be  
Solong haue they comforted her that she  
Receyued hath by hope and by reason  
The enprentynge of her consolation



## The Frankeleyns Tale

Throughe whiche hez grete sorowe began to a swage  
She may nat alwey duryn in suche arage  
And eke Arueragus in alle this care  
Hath sent hez lettres home of his welefare  
And that he wol come hastely agayne  
Whelkes hadde this sorowe hez hert slayne  
Hez frendes sawe hez sorowes gan for to slake  
And prayed hez on theire knees for goddes sake  
To come and rone hez in company  
Alwey to dypuen hez derke fantesye  
And synally she graunted that request  
For wele she sawe it was for the best  
Now stode hez castelle fast by the see  
And ofte with hez frendes walkith she  
Hez to disporte vpon the banke on hye  
Where as she may shpipes and barges spe  
Salpnyng theire course where them lyst to go  
But yet was that a parcel of hez wo  
For to hez selue ful ofte allas sayde she  
Is there no shippe so many as I se  
Wolde brynge home my lord than were myn hert  
Alle warpyshed of his byttre peynes smert  
Another tyme she wolde sytte and thynke  
And cast hez eyen downward from the brynke  
But when she sawe the gryfely rockes blake  
For berz feer so wolde hez hert quake  
That on hez fete she myght nat sustene  
Than wolde she sytte doune vpon the grene  
And pitously into the see beholde  
And say right thus with soroufulle sighes colde  
Eterne god that throughe thy purueaunce  
Ledest the worlde by certayne ordenaunce  
In ydelle asmen say ye nothyng make

But lorde this gryssly feendly rockes blake  
 That sownen rather vnto foule confusioun  
 Of werke than any fayre creacioun  
 Of suche a parfyte wise god and a stable  
 Why haue ye wrought this werke vnresonable  
 For by this werke north south west ne est  
 There nys y fostryd man byrde ne beest  
 It doth no gode to my wytte but annoyeth  
 Se ye nat lorde hou mankynde it distroyeth  
 Ay hundreth thousand bodies of mankynde  
 Haue rockes slayne al though they be nat in mynde  
 Sithen mankynde is so faire a part of thy werke  
 Thou it made first lyke to thy owne merke  
 Than semyth it ye haue do a grete charite  
 Toward mankynde but hou may it than be  
 That ye suche meanys make it to distroyen  
 Suche meanes ne do no gode but annoyen  
 I wote wele clerkes wol say as them lyst  
 By argumentes that alle is for the best  
 Though I ne can the causes wele know  
 But that god that made the wynde to blowe  
 As hepe my lorde this is my conclusioun  
 To rheslet I al this disputacioun  
 But wolde god that alle these rockes blake  
 Were sonkyn in to helle for his sake  
 These rockes sle my herte for fere  
 Thus wolde she say with many a pytous tere  
 Her frendes saue that it was no dispozte  
 To roumyn by the see but discomforte  
 And shapen for to pley somwhere elles  
 But leden her by ryuers and by wellles  
 And eke in othez places dilectables  
 They daunse and pley at the chesse & at the tables



## The Frankeleyns Tale

So on a day right on the morowe tyde  
Vnto a gardeyn that was there beside  
In whiche that they hadde made theire ordenaunce  
Of vitayle and of othez purueaunce  
They gone and pley them al the long day  
And this was in the sixte morowe of may  
Whiche may hath peynted with her soft shoures  
This gardeyn fulle of leys and of floures  
And craft of mannys honde so curiously  
Arayde hath this gardyne truly  
That neuir was there gardyn of suche pryce  
But if it were the berry paradise  
The odoure of floures and the freshe sight  
Wolde haue made any hert lichte  
That euir was born but if to grete sekenesse  
Or to grete sorowe helde it in distresse  
So fulle it was of beaute with plesaunce  
Anone after dyners gan they to daunce  
And song also saue doerrigene allone  
Whiche made alwey her compleynte and her mone  
For she ne sawe him in the daunce go  
That was her husbonde and her loue also  
But neuirthelesse she must her tyme abyde  
And with gode hope lete her sorowes slyde  
Upon this daunce amonge othez men  
Daunced a squyer bifoze Doerrigene  
That fresher was and iolyer of arraye  
As to my dome than is the moneth of May  
He syngeth daunsieth passing any othez man  
That is or was sithen the worlde began  
Therwith he was if men sholde him discryue  
One of the best fayryst men on lyue  
yonge stronge vertuous riiche and wise

*George M. Smith*  
*1888*  
The Frankeleyns Tale

And wele beloued and holden in grette pryce  
And shortly if I the soth tel shalle  
On wyttyng of this Dozytene at alle  
This lusty squyer seruaunt to Venus  
Whiche that clepyd was aurelius  
Hath loued hez best of any creature  
Two yere and more as was his anenture  
But neuir durst he telle hez his greuaunce  
Withoute the cuppe dranke he alle his penaunce  
He was despayred nothing durst he say  
Saue in his songes somdele worde he wrey  
His wo as in a general compleynyng  
He sayde he louyd and was beloued nothing  
Of suche mater made he many layes  
Songes compleyntes roundels vircayes  
How that he durst nat his sorowe tel  
But languyng as a fure doth in helle  
And dreyne he sayde he must as dreyne Echo  
For Narcissus that durst nat telle his woo  
In othez maner than ye here now say  
Ne durst he nat his wo to hez be wray  
Saue parauenture at festes and at daunces  
There yong folke heppyn theire obseruaunces  
It may wele been he looked in hez face  
In suche a wise as men that ashen grace  
But nothing wist she of his entent  
Neirthelesse it happed oz they thens went  
Bicause that he was hez nyghboure  
And was a man of worshippe and honoure  
And hadde knowen him of tymes yore  
They fallen in speche and so more and more  
In to his purpos drewe Aurelius  
And whan he sawe his tyme he sayde thus



## The Frankeleyns Tale

Madame quod he by god that this worlde made  
So that I wylst I myght poure herte gladde  
I wolde that day that poure Arueragus  
Went ouer the see. that I Aurelius  
Hadde gone there I sholde neuiz come agayne  
For wele I wote my seruyce is in bayne  
My guerdon is but brestyng of myn hert  
Madame rewe on my peynes smert  
For with one worde ye may me skeep or saue  
Here at poure feet wolde god I were begraue  
I ne haue as now nomore leysur to say  
Haue mercy swete and do me nat to dye  
She gan toloke vpon this aurelius  
Is this poure wyl quod she and say ye thus  
Neuiz erst quod she ne wylst I what ye ment  
But nowe Aurelye I knowe poure entent  
By that god that gaue me soule and lyf  
Ne shal I neuiz be vntrewe wyl  
In worde ne in werkes as fer as I haue wyl  
I wyl be his to whome that I am knytte  
Take this for fynalle aunswere as for me  
But after than in pley thus sayde she  
Aurelye sayde she by high god aboue  
yet wol I graunt you to be poure loue  
Sithen I se you so pytously complayne  
Poke what day that endlongt brytayne  
ye remeue alle the rockes stone by stone  
That they ne lette bote ne shippe to gone  
I say whan ye haue made the coast so clene  
Of rockes that there is no stone y seen  
Than wol I loue you best of any man  
Haue here my trouthe in alle that euiz I can  
Is ther none othez grace in poure honde quod he

## The Frankeleyns Tale

No by that lord quod she that maketh me  
For wel I wote that it shalle neuir betyde  
Let such folke oute of youre hert a slyde  
What deynthe sholde a man haue in his lyf  
For to loue another mannyng wyf  
That hath her body whan so that him lykith  
Aureolus ful ofte soze siketh  
Wo was Aurel whan that he this herd  
And with a sorowful hert he thus answerd  
Madame quod he this were impossible  
Than must I dye in soden deth horrible  
And with that worde he turned him anone  
Tho cam her frendes many one  
And in the aleys roumed by and down  
And nothing wiste of this conclusioun  
And sodenly begonnen reuel newe  
Tyl the bright sonne lost his hewe  
For the orisont had rest the sonne his light  
This is a smocke to say as it was nyght  
And home they gone in ioye and in solas  
Sane only wretched Aureolus allas  
He to his house is gone with sorowful hert  
He sayeth that he ne may from his deth astert  
Him semeth that he felith his hert colde  
Vnto heuyn his hondes he gan holde  
And on his knees bare he set him down  
And in raupnyng sayde this orisoun  
For berry woo oute of his wytte he Brayde  
He nyf what he spake but thus he sayde  
With pitous hert his pleynt hath begonne  
Vnto the goddes and first vnto the sonne  
He sayde apollo god and gouernoure  
Of euery plante herbe tre and floure



## The Frankleyns Tale

That yeeuest after thy declynacion  
To che of them his tyme and his season  
And thyn herborowe chaungith lowe and hye  
Forde phebus cast thy mercpable eye  
On wretched Aurely whiche am but loyn  
Forde my lady hath my deeth sworn  
Withouten gylte but thy benygnyte  
Upon my dedely herte haue some pyte  
But wele I wote forde phebus if ye lyst  
ye may me helpe saue my lady best  
Now bouchesauf that I may pou deuyse  
How that I may be holpen and in what wise  
poure blissful sustyr Lucina the shene  
That of the see chief goddesse is and quene  
Though neptunus haue deyte in the see  
yet Empresse aboue him is she  
ye knowe wile forde right as her desire  
Is to be quychned and lyghned of youre fyre  
For whiche she folowith pou ful besply  
Right so the see desireth naturally  
To folowe her and she that is goddesse  
Bothe in the see and ryuers more and lesse  
Wherfore forde phebus this is my request  
Do this myracle or do myn herte brest  
That nowe next at this opposicioun  
Within whiche signe shalle be the lyoun  
As prayeth her so grete a flode to brynge  
That fyue fadom at the leest it ouer sprynge  
The hest rokke in Armorphe Britayne  
And let this flode endure yeres twayne  
Than certis to my lady may I say  
Holdith youre heest the rockes be a way  
Forde phebus this myracle do for me

## The Frankleyns Tale

Pray hez that she go no faster cours than ye  
I say thus praye youre sustre that she go  
No faster course than ye in peres two  
Than shal she be at euyn ful alwey  
And sprynge flode last both nyght and day  
And but ye bouchshauf in suche manere  
To graunt me my souerayne lady dere  
Pray hez to synke euery roche a doun  
Into helle theire owne derke mansioun  
Vndre the grounde there plato duellith in  
Or neuiz mo shal I my lady Wynne  
Thy temple in delphos wol I barfote seke  
Lord phebus se the teris on my cheke  
And of my payne haue some compassioun  
And with that worde in swoun he fyl a doun  
And long tyme he lay forth in a traunce  
His brother whiche that knewe his penaunce  
Up caught him and to bedde hath him brought  
Despeyred in this turment and in his thought  
Pete I this woful creature lye  
These he whether he wol lye or dye  
Arueragus with hese and honoure  
As he that was of cheualry the floure  
Is comyn home and othez worthy men  
A blissful arte thou nowe Dorriten  
That hast thy blissful husband in thy armes  
The fresche knyght the worthy man of armes  
That loueth the as his herteslyf  
No thing ne lyst he to be ymagynatyf  
If any wight hadde spoke whiles he was oute  
To hez of loue therof hadde he no doute  
He nat entendith to no suche matere  
But daunsith iustith and makith gode chere



## The Frankleyns Tale

And thus in ioye and blisse I let them duelle  
And of the seke Aurelius wol I telle  
In langure and in turment furious  
Two yere and more ley this Aurelius  
Or any foote he myght on erthe gone  
Ne comforte in this tyme hadde he none  
Saue of his Brother whiche was a clerke  
He knewe alle this wo and alle this werke  
For to none othe creature certayne  
Of this matere he durst no worde seyne  
Vndre his brest he hare it more secre  
Than euir dyd pamphilus for galaathe  
His brest was hole withoute for to seen  
But in his hert ay was the arowe hene  
As wele ye knowe of a surfanure  
In surgery ful perlous is the cure  
But men myght touche the arowe or come ther by  
His brother wepith and wayleth pryuelly  
Tyl at the last him fyl in remembraunce  
That whiles he was at Diliaunce in fraunce  
As yong clerkes that been lycherous  
To rede artes that been curpous  
Sekyn in euery halke and euery herne  
Particuler sciences for to lerne  
He him remembred that vpon a day  
In Dylpaunce in his studye a boke he say  
Of matyhe naturalle whiche his felawe  
That was that tyme a bachelez of la we  
Had pryuelly vpon his deske last  
Al were he there to lern a nother craft  
Whiche boke spake moche of operaciouns  
Touchyng the eyght and twenty mansiouns  
That longen to the mone and suche folp

## The frankleyns Tale

As in oure daies is nat worth a fye  
For holy chirche sayeth in oure beleue  
Ne suffreth nat illusioun vs to greue  
And whan this boke was in remembraunce  
Anone for iope his hert gan to daunce  
And to him selue he sayde pryuelly  
My brother warisshe shal be hastely  
For I am spyker that ther be sciences  
By whiche men make diuerse apparences  
Suche as the se subtil treggetours pley  
For ofte at festes haue I herde sey  
That treggetours within an halles large  
Haue made come in a water and a barge  
And in the halles rowen vp and down  
Some tyme hath semed come a grete loun  
And some tyme floures sprynge in a mede  
Some tyme a vyne and grapes white and rede  
Some tyme a castel of lyme and stone  
And whan he lyketh it boydeth anone  
Thus semeth it to many a manny sight  
Now than conclude I thus if I myght  
At Disaunce some olde felawe fynde  
That hadde the monys mansiouns in mynde  
Or other matthe natural aboue  
He sholde wele make my brother haue his loue  
For with an apparence a clerke may make  
To manny sight that alle the rockes blak  
Of brytayne were boyded euerichone  
And shippes by the brynkes comyn and gone  
And in suche fourme endure a woke or two  
Than were my brother warisshe of his wo  
Than muste she nedes holde her beheest  
Or elles he shal shame her at the lest



## The Frankleyns Tale

What sholde I make a lenggere tale of this!  
Unto his Brothers bedde y come he is  
And suche comforte he paue him for to goon  
To Diliaunce that he by stert anoon  
And on his wey than on warde is he fare  
In hope for to be byssed of his care  
Whan they were come almoost to that cyte  
But if it were a two furlong or thre  
A pong clerke rompng by him selue they mette  
Whiche that in latyn thristely them grette  
And after that he sayde a wondre thing  
I knowe quod he the cause of youre compng  
And or they furthelz any fote went  
He tolde them alle what was theire entent  
This Brytoun clerke him asked of felawes  
The whiche he hadde knowen in olde daies  
And he aunswerde him that they dede were  
For whiche he wept ful many a tere  
Doun of his horse Aurelius light anone  
And with this magicien forth he gan gone  
Home to his house and made them wele at ease  
Them lacked no bytyle that them myght please  
So wele arayed house as there was one  
Aurelius in his lyf sa we neuiz none  
He shewde them or he went to souper  
Forestes parkes ful of wylde dere  
There sa we he hertes with theire hornes hpe  
The gretest that were euiz sepe with eye  
He sa we of them an hundreth slayne with houndes  
And some of arowes blede and bytter woundes  
He sa we whan boyded were the se wylde dere  
The faconers upon a fayre ryuer  
That with theire haukes haue the herons slayne

## The Franklyn's Tale

Tho sawe he knyghtes iustynge in a pleyne  
And after this he dyd him suche ple saunce  
That he him shewyd his lady in a daunce  
In whiche him selue daunced as him thought  
And whan this maister that this maggyke wrought  
Sawe it was tyme he clapped his hondes to  
And fare wele al oure reuel was y do  
And yet remeued they neuiz oute of the house  
While they sawe al this sight meruaylous  
But in his stodp there his bokes be  
They sytten styll and no wight but they thre  
To him this mayster called his squyer  
And sayde him thus is redy oure souper  
Almoost an houre it is I undertake  
Syn I pou hadde oure souper for to make  
Whan that these worthy men went with me  
Into my stodpe there my bokes be  
Sir quod the squyer whan it lyketh you  
It is al redy though ye wol right now  
Go we than souper quod he it is for the best  
These amorous folke somtyme must haue rest  
And after souper fyl they in trefte  
What sūme sholde the maysters guerdon be  
To remeue alle the rocks in brytayne  
And eke from gironde to the mouth of sayne  
He made him straunge he swore so god him saue  
Lesse than a thousand ponde he wolde nat haue  
Ne gladly for that sūme he wold nat gone  
Aurelius with blisful hert anone  
Sayth thus fy on a thousand ponde  
The wyde worlde which men say is rounde  
I wolde it yeue if I were lord of it  
This bargayne is ful dryue and ful knytte



# The Frankleyns Tale

ye shal be payd truly by my trouthe  
But lokeith now for none negligence ne slough  
ye tarys here no lenger than to morowe  
May quod the clerke haue here my fayth to borowe  
To bed he goth Aurelius whan him lest  
And wele nyght alle that nyght he hadde rest  
What for his laboure and for his hope of blisse  
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lyffe  
Upon the morowe whan it was day  
To brytayne toke they the right wey  
Aurelius and this magicien him beside  
And he descended there they wol abyde  
And this was as the boke doth remembre  
The colde frosty season of Decembre  
Phebus weyed olde and hewed lyke latoun  
That afore in his hote declynacioun  
Shone as the burned golde with streames bright  
But now in capricorne a doun he light  
Where as he shone ful pale I dar wele seyn  
The bytter frostes with the slyte and rayne  
Distroyed hath the grene in euery yerde  
Janus spyteth by the fyre with double berde  
And drynkieth of his bugle horne the wyne  
Bifore him standith the braun of the tusked swyne  
And nowel cryeth euery lusty man  
Aurelius in alle that euery he can  
Doth to his mayster chere and reuerence  
And prayeth him to done his diligence  
To bring him oute of his peynes smart  
Or with a swerde that he wolde slyte his hert  
This subtel clerke suche routh had of this man  
That nyght and day his spedde him that he can  
To wayte a tyme of this conclusioun

## The Frankleyns Tale

This is to say to make illusioun  
By suche an apparaunt iogeltype  
I can no termes of Astrologye  
That she and euery wight sholde wene and say  
That of Brytayne the rockes were a wey  
Or elles they were sonkyn vndre the grounde  
So at the last he hath his tyme y founde  
To make his iape and his wrechidnesse  
Of suche a superstitious cursidnesse  
His tables tolentanes forth he brough  
Ful wele correctid it lacked nought  
Ne yther his ceket ne his expans peres  
Ne his rotis ne his othez geres  
As been his centris and his argumentes  
And his proporcional conuenientes  
For his equacions in euery thyng  
And by his eyght spere in his workyng  
He knewe ful wele how fer alnath was shoue  
From the hede of that fyve aries aboue  
That in the nynthe spere considered is  
Ful subtilly he had calked al this  
Whan he hadde founde his first mansioun  
He knewe the remenaunt by proporcioun  
And knewe the rysyng of his mone wele  
And in whose face and terme and euerydele  
And knewe wel the monys mansioun  
Attendaunt vnto his operacioun  
And knewe also wele his othez obseruaunces  
For suche illusiouns and suche myschances  
As hethen folke vseden in tho dayes  
For whiche no lengere makith he delays  
But through his matyke for a woke or twey  
It semed that alle the rockes were a wey



## The Frankeleyns Tale

Aurelius yet whiche that dispeyred is  
Whether he shalle haue his loue or fare a mys  
And wayteth nyght and day on this myracle  
And whan he knewe ther was none obstakle  
That boyded were the rockes echone  
Down to his maisters feet he fyl anon  
And sayde I woful wrechyd Aurelius  
Thanke you lord and my lady Venus  
That me haue holped fro my caris colde  
And to the temple his wey hath he holde  
Where as he knewe he shoulde his lady se  
And whan he sawe his tyme anone right he  
With dredful hert and with humble chere  
Salued hath his souerayne lady dere  
My right worthy lady quod this woful man  
Whom I moost drede and loue as I best can  
And lothest were in alle this worlde displease  
Nere it that for you I haue suche dis ease  
That I must dye here at youre fote anon  
Nat wol I tel you I am wo begon  
But certis othez I must dye or playne  
ye sle me tyttles for berzy peyne  
But of my deth though ye haue no routh  
Adurseth you or that ye breke youre trouthe  
And repente you for that god aboue  
Or ye me sle bicause that I you loue  
For madame ye wote what ye haue hyghte  
Nat that I chalange any thing of right  
Of you my souerayne lady but of youre grace  
But in the gardyn yondre in suche a place  
ye wote right wele what ye behight me  
And in my honde there youre trouthe plight ye  
To loue me best god wote ye sayde so

## The Frankeleyns Tale

Al be it that I vnworthy be thereto  
Madame I speke it for the honoure of you  
More than for to saue my hertes lyf right now  
I haue do so as ye comaunded me  
And if ye vouche sauf ye may go se  
Doth as you lyst haue poure heest in mynde  
For quicke or dede right there shal ye me fynde  
In you lyth alle to do me lyue or deye  
But wele I wote the rockes been a wey  
He takith his leue and she a stonped stode  
In al her face nas there one drope of blode  
She wende neuir to come in suche a trapppe  
Allas quod she that euir this sholde happe  
For wende I neuir by possibylite  
That suche a monstre or meruayle myght be  
It is ayenst the processe of nature  
And home she goth a soroful creature  
For verry feer vnnethes myght she go  
She wepith and wayleth a day or two  
And swouneth that it routh was to se  
But why it was vnto noman tolde she  
For oute of town was gone Arueragus  
But to her selue she spake and sayde thus  
With pale face and soroufulle chere  
In her compleynthe as ye shalle after here  
Allas quod she on the fortune I playne  
That vnware wrapped hast me in this cheyne  
Fro whiche to scape knowe I no socoure  
Saue only deth or grete dishonoure  
One of these two behoueth me to chese  
But neuirthelesse yet hadde I lyue lese  
My lyf than of my body haue a shame  
Or knowe my selue fals or lese my name



## The Frankeleyns Tafe

And With my deth I may be quytte y wys  
Rath thez nat many a noble wyf or this  
And many a mayde sleyn her selue alas  
Rathet than With theiz body done a trespaas  
yes certis thes stozies berith witnesse  
Whan threty tyrauntes ful of cursydnesse  
Had sleyn sridon in Athenes at the fest  
They comaunded his doughters for to arest  
And brynge bifoyn them in despyte  
Al naked to fulfille theire foule desite  
And in theire faders blode they made them dauuce  
Vpon the pauement god geue them myschaunce  
For whiche the wofulle maydens ful of drede  
Rathet then they wolde lese theire madynhede  
They been pruely stert into a Welle  
And drent them selue as the bokes tel  
They of Mecene leten enquire and seke  
Of Lacedomy fyfty maydens eke  
On whiche they wold haue doon theiz licherp  
But was ther noon of al that company  
That she nas slayn and With a glade entent  
Chees rather for to dye than for to assent  
To be oppressed of her maydenhede  
Why shode I than to dye be in drede  
So eke the tyraunt Aristocrides  
That louyd a mayde hight stymphalides  
Whan her fadre slayne was on a nyght  
Vnto Dyanes temple goth she right  
And hent the ymage in her hondes two  
From whiche ymage wolde she neuiz go  
No wight the hondes of her myght arace  
Tyl she was sleyn right in the place  
Now sithen that maydens hadde suche despyte]

To been defouled With mannys delyste  
 Wele oughit a wyf rather her selue to sie  
 Than be defouled as it thynkith me  
 What shal I say of Hasdribaldris wif  
 That at Cartage beraft her selue her lyf  
 Whan that she sawe the Romaynes wan the toun  
 Se toke her children alle and shipped a doun  
 Into the fyre and chose rather to dye  
 Than that any Romayne dyd her belonge  
 Hath nat Lucrece slayne her self allas  
 At Rome for that she oppressed was  
 Of tarquyne for her thought it was a shame  
 To lyue whan she hadde loste her name  
 The feynyn maydens of Melleseye also  
 Haue slayne them selue for verzy drede and wo  
 Rather than the folke of galle sholde them oppresse  
 Mo than a thousand stozes as I gesse  
 Coude I telle as touchyng this matere  
 Whan Abradate was slepyne .his wif so dere  
 Her selue slough and lete her blode to glyde  
 In Abradates woundes depe and wyde  
 And sayde my body at the lest wey  
 Ther shalle no wight defoule if I may  
 What shal I of them moo ensamples sayne  
 Sithen that so many haue them selue slayne  
 Wele rather than they wold defouled be  
 I wol conclude that it is the best for me  
 To sie my self than be defouled thus  
 I wol be true vnto Arueragus  
 Or elles sle my selue in some manere  
 Right as dyd Democenes doughter dere  
 Bicause she ne wolde defouled be  
 O Cedasus it is ful grete pyte



## The frankeleyns Tale

To rede how thy doughter dyed alas  
That slough her selue in suche a maner caas  
As grete pyte it was or wele more  
The theban mayden that for Nichamore  
Her self slough right for suche manere wo  
And another theban mayden dyd right so  
For one of macedone had her ouir pressed  
She with her deth her maydenhede redressed  
What shal I say of Niceratis wyf  
That for suche a caas beraft her selue her lyf  
How true eke was also Alcebeades  
That for his loue to dye rather chees  
Than for to suffre his body vnburied to be  
So whiche a wyf was Alceste also quod she  
What sayeth I mere of gode Penelope  
Al grece knowith of her chastite  
Parde of Pacedomea is writen thus  
That whan at trope was sleyn prothoselaus  
No lenger wolde she lyue after his day  
The same of noble porcyra tel I may  
Without Brutus coude she neuir lyue  
To whome she hadde her hert alle pyue  
The parfyte wyshode of Arthemecye  
Honoured is throughe oute alle Barbarye  
Dienta que ne thy wysly chastite  
To alle wyues may a myrroure be  
The same thing I say of belyea  
Of Rodogone and eke balerya  
Thus pleyneyth Dorrigene a day or twey  
Purposyng euir that she wolde dye  
But neuir thelesse vpon the thrydde nyght  
Home cometh Arueragus the worthy knyght  
And askith her why that she wepith so sore

And she gan wepe euir lenger the more  
 Alas quod she the tyme that I was born  
 Thus haue I sayde quod she thus haue I sworn  
 And tolde him alle the raas by and by  
 How she hadde promysed ignorantly  
 The squyer as ye haue herde tofore  
 It nedith nat to reherce it any more  
 This husbonde with glade chere in frendly wise  
 Answerde and sayde as I shalle deuyse  
 Is there aught elles Dorigene but this  
 Nay nay she sayde god helpe me so as wys  
 This is to mekyl and it were goddes wyl  
 Ye wif quod he lat sleppyn that is styll  
 It may be wele yet perauenture to day  
 Ye shalle poure trouthe holde by my say  
 For god so wysly haue mercy on me  
 I hadde wele lyuez styched for to be  
 For very loue whiche I to you haue  
 But ye sholde poure trouthe kepe and saue  
 Trouthe is the highest thing that man may kepe  
 But with that worde he brast anon to wepe  
 And sayde I you forbede on peyne of deth  
 That neuir while you lastith lyf or breth  
 To no wight to telle of this mysauenture  
 As I may best I wol my wo endure  
 Ne make no contenaunce of heuynesse  
 That folke of you may deme harme or gesse  
 And forth he clepith a squyer and a mayde  
 Go forth anone with Dorigene he sayde  
 And bring her to suche a place anon  
 They toke theire leue and on theire wey they gon  
 But they ne wist why she thidre went  
 He wolde no wight telle his entent



## The frankeleyns Tale

Paraventure an hepe of you p wys  
Wyl holden him a lewde man in this  
That he wol put his wif in ieopardy  
Ber knyght the tale oz ye on him crye  
She may haue bettre fortune than you semeth  
And whan that ye haue herde the tale. demeth  
This squyer whiche that hight Aurelius  
On Dozrigene that was so amorous  
Of auenture happed her to mete  
Amydde the toun right in the quychest strete  
As she wolde gone the wey forth right  
Toward the gardeyne there as she hadde hight  
And he was to the gardyn warde also  
For wele he spied whan she wolde go  
Dute of her house to any maner place  
But thus they meten by auenture and grace  
And he salueth her with glade entent  
And asked of her whither warde she went  
And she aunswerd half as she wee madde  
Vnto the the gardyn as my husbonde hadde  
My trouthe for to holde alas alas  
Aurelius gan to wondre in this caas  
And in his hert hadde grete compassioun  
Of her chere and of her lamentacioun  
And of Arueragus the worthy knyght  
That hadde her holde that she hadde hight  
So lothe him was if she sholde breke her trouthe  
And in his herte he caught of this grete routh  
Consideryng the best on euery syde  
That from that lnt yet were him lyuez abyde  
Than to do so high a folysshe wrechydnesse  
Apenst fraunchise and gentylnesse  
For whiche in fewe wordes sayde he thus

## The Frankeleyn Tale

Madame say to youre lord Arueragus  
That sithen I se his grete gentylnesse  
To you and eke I se youre grete distresse  
That him were lyuez haue shame & that were routhe  
Than ye to me thus sholde breke youre trouthe  
I haue wele lyuez euir to suffre woo  
Than I departe the loue bitwix you two  
I you relese madame into youre honde  
Dypte euery surement and euery bonde  
That ye haue made to me as here biforn  
Sithen that tyme that ye were first born  
My trouthe I plight I shal you neuiz reprec  
Of none behest and here I take my leue  
As of the trewest and eke the best wyf  
That euiz yet I knewe in alle my lyf  
But euery wif be ware of her behest  
On Dorigene remembreth at the lest  
Thus can a squyer do a gentyl dede  
As wele as can a knyght withouten drede  
She thankith him upon her knees al bare  
And home to her husbonde is she fare  
And tolde him al as ye haue herde me sayde  
And be ye syher he was wele apayed  
That it were impossible me to write  
What sholde I lengere of this caas endyte  
Arueragus and Dorigene his wif  
In souerayne blisse ledyn forth theire lyf  
Neuiz after was there angre them bitwene  
He cherissed her as though she were a quene  
And she was trewe to him for euir more  
Of these two folke ye get of me nomore  
Aurelius that his cost hath al forloren  
Cur sith the tyme that euiz he was born



## The Frankleyns Tale

Alas alas quod he that I behight  
Of pured golde a thousand pounde wyght  
Vnto this philosopher hou shal I do  
I se nomore but that I am fordo  
My heritage I must nedes selle  
And be a beggar here I may nat duelle  
And shampn alle my kynrede in this place  
But I of him may gete som grace  
But nathelesse I wol of him assay  
At certayne peres and daies to pay  
And thanke him of his grete curtesye  
My trouthe wyl I kepe I wol nat lye  
With hert sore he goth vnto his cofre  
And brought gold vnto this philosophre  
The value of fyue hundred pounde I gesse  
And him beseked of his gentylnesse  
To graunte him daies of the remenaunt  
And sayde mayster I dar wele make auaunt  
I fayled neuiz of my trouth as yet  
For schirly my dette shal wele be quyt  
Toward you hou euir that I fare  
To go a beggyn in my hyrtel bare  
But if ye wolde wouche sauf on suretye  
Two pere or thre for to respyte me  
Than were I wele for elles must I selle  
My heritage ther is no more to telle  
This philosophre sobyrly aunswerde  
And sayde thus whan he his wordes herde  
Haue I nat holde couenaunt vnto the  
yes certis wele and truly quod he  
Hast thou nat had thy lady as the lyketh  
No no quod he and foroufully he siketh  
What was the cause telle me if thou can

## The Frankleyns Tale

Aurelius anon his tale began  
And tolde him al as ye haue herde bifoze  
It nedith nat to reherce it you more  
He sayde Arueragus of gentylnes  
Hadde leuyr to dye in sorowe and in distres  
Than that his wyf were of her trouthe fals  
The sorowe of Dorrigene he tolde him als  
How loth her were to be a wyched wyf  
And that she hadde leuyr haue lost her lyf  
And her trouthe she swore through innocence  
She neuir erst herde speke of apparence  
That made me to haue in her so grete pyte  
And right as frely as he sent her to me  
As frely sent I her home to him agayn  
This is al and some there is no more to sayne  
This philosopher aunswerde leue brother  
Eueriche of you dyd gentylnesse to othez  
Thou art a squire and he is a knyght  
But god forbede for his blissful myght  
But a clerke coude do as gentyl a dede  
As wele as any of you it is no drede  
Sir I relese the thy thousand pounde  
As now thou were copen oute of the grounde  
Ne neuir oz now ne haddest knowen me  
For sir I wol nat take a peny of the  
For alle my craft ne for my trauayle  
Thou hast wele payde for my bytaple  
It is ynough fare wele and haue gode day  
And toke his horse and forth he goth his wey  
Lordpnyges this question than aske I you  
Whiche was the moost fre as thynkith you  
Now tellith me oz that ye furthez wende  
I can no more my tale is at an ende



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Here endith the fraunkleyns tale  
And folowith the prologe of the Wyf of Bath



e xperience though none auctorite  
Were in this worlde is right ynough for me  
To speke of wo that is in mariage  
But lordes sithen I t welue yere was of age  
Thanked be god that is eternalle onlyue  
Husbondes at the chirche dore haue I had fyue  
If I so ofte myght haue wedded be  
And al were worthy men in theire degre  
But me was tolde nat long a go y wys  
That sithen crist went n. uir but onys  
To weddyng in the Cane of galile  
That by the same ensample taught he me  
That I ne wedded shulde be but onys  
To he whiche a sharpe worde for the nones  
Beside a wellle Jesus god and man

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Spake in reproof of the samaritan  
Thou hast had fyue husbondes sayd he  
And that ilke man that now hath the  
Is nat thy husbonde thus he sayde certayne  
What he ment therby I can nat sayn  
But that I aske why the fyfte man  
Was nat husbonde to the samaritan  
How many myght he haue in mariage  
yet herde I neuir telle, in myn age  
Of this nombre verry diffinicion  
Men may deme and glose by and down  
But wele I wote expresse withouten lye  
That god had vs wey and multiplie  
That gentyl texte can I wele vnderstond  
Eke wele I wote he sayde that myr husbonde  
Sholde lue fader and modre and take to me  
But of nombre no mencion made he  
Of bytgampe oz of octogampe  
Why sholde men speke of it belonpe  
Eo here the wyse kyng dauid Salamon  
I trowe he had wyues mo than one  
As wolde to god it leful were to me  
To haue refresshyng half so oft as he  
Whiche a pest of god had he for al his wyues  
Noman hath suche that in this worlde on lyue is  
God wote this noble king as to my wytte  
The first nyght had many a mery fyte  
With eche of them so wele was him on lyue  
ye blessyd be god that I haue hadde fyue  
Of whiche I haue pyched oute the best  
Bothe of theire neyther purse and eke theire chest  
Dyuerse scoles makith parfyte clerkes  
And dyuerse practyke in many sondry werkes



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Makith the werkman parfyte sikerly  
Of fyue husbondes scolynge am I  
Welcome the sixte whan that euir he shal  
Forsoth I wyl nat kepe me chaste in al  
Whan my husbonde is fro the worlde y gone  
Some cristen man shal wedde me anone  
For the appostole sayth that I am fre  
To wedde a goddes half where it lyketh me  
He sayth to be wedded it is no synne  
Better it is to be wedded than to brenne  
What reckith me though men say belony  
Of shrewde I ameth and of his bygamyne  
I wote Abraham was a ful holy man  
And eke Jacob as fer as euir I here can  
And eche of them hadde mo wyues than two  
And many a nother holy man also  
Where can ye say in any maner age  
That euir god defended mariage  
By expresse wordes I pray you telle me  
Or where comaunded he euir virgynite  
I woot as wele as ye it is no drede  
The appostel whan he spake of madynhede  
He sayde that therof precept hadde he none  
Men may counseyle a woman to be one  
But counseyl is no maner comaundment  
He puttith that in oure owne iugement  
For hadde god comaunded madynhede  
Than had he dampned weddyng oute of drede  
And certis if there nere no sede y so we  
Virgynite what sholde therof growe  
Paule durst nat comaunde at the leste  
A thing whiche his mayster yaued none heste  
The darte is set vpon virgynite

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Cache who so may who rennyth best let se  
But this worde is nat take of euery Wight  
But there as god wol yeue it of his myght  
I wote wele the appostel was a mayde  
But natheles though he wrote and sayde  
He wolde euery Wight were suche as he  
Al is but counseyl to birtgynite  
And for to be a Wyf he paue me leue  
Of indulgence so it be nat to repreue  
To wedde me if that my make dye  
Withoute exceptioun of bygamyne  
Al were it gode no woman for to touche  
He ment in his bedde or in his couche  
For peryl it is fyre and towe to assemble  
ye knowe what this ensample may resemble  
This is al and some he helde birtgynite  
More parfyte than weddyng in freelte  
freelte clepe I but if that he or she  
wolde leden al theire lyf in chastite  
I graunt it wele I haue none enuye  
Though maydenhede preferre bygamyne  
It lyketh them to be cleane in body and goost  
Of myn estate I wyl make no boost  
ful wele I knowe a lord in his householde  
Hath nat euery vessel of siluer and of golde  
Some been of tre and done theire lordes seruise  
God clepith to him folke in sondry wyse  
And eche hath of god a propre yest  
Som this som that as him lyst to shyste  
Virtgynite is a grete perfection  
And contynence eke with deuocioun  
But crist that is of perfection the well  
Had nat euery Wight he sholde go selle



## The wyf of Bathes prologue

Alle that he hath and yeue it to the poure  
And in suche wyse folowe him and his fore  
He spake to him that wyl lyue parfytly  
And lordynges by poure leue that am nat I  
I wol bestowe the floure of alle myn age  
In the actes and in the frute of mariage  
Tel me also to what conclusioun  
Were membres made of generacioun  
And of so parfyte wise a wight y wrought  
Trust me wel they be nat made for naught  
Glose who so wol and say by and down  
That they were made for purgacioun  
Of bryne and of othez thinges smale  
Was eke to knowe a female from a male  
And for no cause elles say ye no  
The experience wote wel it is nat so  
So that the clerkes with me be nat wrothe  
I say thus that they be made for lothe  
That is to say bothe for office and for ease  
Of engendrure there we god nat displease  
Why shulde nat elles men in bokes sette  
That man shal yelde to his wyf her dette  
Where with sholde he make his payement  
If he ne used his sely instrument  
Then were they made byon a creature  
To purge him and eke to engendre  
But I say nat that euery wight is holde  
That hath suche harneys as I to you tolde  
To go and use them in engendrure  
Than sholde men of chastite take no cure  
Crist was a mayde and shapen as a man  
And many a saynt sithen the worlde began  
yet lyued they euyr in parfyte chastite

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

But I nyl enuie non birtynite  
Let them with brede of pured whete be fedde  
And let to vs wyues hote barle brede  
And yet with barlee brede as marke tel can  
Dure lordes Iesus refreshed many a man  
In suche estate as god hath clepyd vs  
I wyl perseuere I am nat precious  
In wyfshode wyl I vse myn instrument  
As frely as my maker hath it sent  
If I be daungerous god geue me sorowe  
My husbonde shal it haue both eue and morowe  
Whan that him lyst come forth and pay his dette  
An husbonde wol I haue I wol nat lette  
That shal be bothe my dettoure and my thral  
And haue his tribulacioun with al  
Upon his flesshe while that I am his wyf  
The power I haue durynge alle my lyf  
Bothe of his propre body and nat he  
Right thus the appostel tolde it me  
And bad oure husbondes for to loue vs wele  
Al this sentence me lyketh euerydele  
Up stert the pardoner and that anone  
Now dame quod he by god and by seynt Iohn  
Ye be a noble prechoure in this caas  
I was aboute to wedde a wyf alas  
What sholde I by it on my flesshe so dere  
yet hadde I lyue wedde no wyf this yere  
Abyde quod she my tale is nat begonne  
May thou shalt drynke of another tonne  
Or that I go shal sauoure werse than ale  
And whan I haue tolde forth my tale  
Of tribulacioun that is in mariatte  
Of whiche I am expert in al myn age



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

This is to say my self hane be the whippe  
Than mayst thou che se whether thou wylt sippe  
Of that tonne that I the shal broche  
Be ware of it or thou to nygh approche  
For I shalle telle ensamples mo than ten  
Who so wol nat be ware by othe men  
By him shal othe men corrected be  
These same wordes writeth protholome  
Rede in his almegetest and take it there  
Dame I wolde praye you if youre wyl were  
Sayde this pardonere as ye beggan  
Tel forth youre tale spare for no man  
And teche vs yong men of youre practyke  
Gladly quod she sithen it may you lyke  
But that I pray to alle this company  
If that I speke after my fantesye  
As take nat a greef of that I say  
For myn entent is but for to play  
Now sires than wol I telle you forth my tale  
As euys I must drynke wyne or ale  
I shal say soth these husbondes that I hadde  
Thre of them were gode and two were badde  
The thre men were gode and riche and olde  
Wnneth myght they the statute holde  
In whiche they were bounden vnto me  
ye wote wele what I mene parde  
As helpe me god I laugh whan that I thynke  
How pytously a nyght I made them to swynke  
And by my fayth I paue of them no store  
They hadde me yene theire londe and theire tresore  
We nedith nat to do them lengere diligence  
To wyne theire loue or do them reuerence  
They loued me so wele by god aboue

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

That I ne tolde no deynthe of her loue  
A wyse woman wol besy her euir in one  
To gete her loue ye there she hath none  
But sithen I hadde them holly in myn honde  
And after they had geue me theire londe  
What sholde I take kepe them for to please  
But if it were for my profet or for myn ease  
I helde them so a werke by myfey  
That many a nyght they song wele a wey  
The bacon was nat fet for them I trowe  
That som man hath in Essex at donmowe  
I gouerned them so wele after my lawe  
That eche of them ful blissful was and faue  
To brynge me gay thynges fro the fayre  
They were ful fayne whan I spake to them fayre  
For god it wote I chydde them spytoufly  
Now herke hou I bare me propirly  
ye wise wyues that can vnderstonde  
Thus sholde ye spekyng and bere them on honde  
For half so holdly can there no man  
Swere and lye as a woman can  
I say nat this by wyues that been wyse  
But if it be whan they them mysauyse  
A wyse wyf if that she can her gode  
Shal bere him on honde the cow is wode  
And take wytnesse of her owen mayde  
Of her assent but herk neth what I sayde  
Syr olde haynard is this thyng aray  
Why is my nyghboures wyf so gay  
She is honoured where euir she goth  
I sytte at home and haue no thristy cloth  
What dost thou at my nyghboures house  
Is she so fayre art thou so amorousse



## The wyf of Bathes prologue

What rownest thou With a mayde Benedicite  
Sir olde lechoure let thy iapes be  
And if that I haue a gossoppe or a frende  
Withouten gylte thou chydest as a feende  
That I walke and pley vnto his house  
Thou comest home as dronken as a mouse  
And prechest on thy benche With euyl preef  
Thou sayst to me it is a grete myscheif  
To wedde a poure woman for costage  
And if she be riche of high parage  
Thou sayst that it is a verry turmentry  
To suffre her pryde and her melancoly  
And if she be fayre thou verry knaue  
Thou sayst that euery holoure wol her haue  
She may no while in chastite abyde  
That is assayled on euery syde  
Thou sayst some folke desire vs for richesse  
Som for oure shappe and som for oure fayrnesse  
And som for she can othez synge or daunce  
And som for gentylnesse or for daliaunce  
Som for her hondes and her armes smale  
Thus goth alle to the deuyll by the tale  
Thou sayst men may nat hepe a castel walke  
It may so long assayled be ouir alle  
And if she be foule thou sayst that she  
Couetyth euery man that she may se  
For as a spaynel she wolde on him lepe  
Tyl she may fynde som man her to chepe  
Ne none so gryp goos goth thez in the lake  
As sayst thou wol be withoute her make  
And sayst it is an harde thyng for to wolde  
A thyng that noman wol his thanke holde  
Thus sayst thou bozelle whan thou gost to bedde

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And that no wise man nedith for to wedde  
Ne noman that entendith vnto leuyng  
With wylde thundre dynte and fyre leuyng  
Moote thyn welked necke be to broke  
Thou sayst a droppynge house and eke smoke  
And chydyng wyues maken men flee  
Dute of theire houses atones a benedicite  
What apleth suche an olde man for to chyde  
Thou sayst we wyues wyl oure vices hyde  
Tyl we be fast and than we wol them shewe  
Wele may that be a prouerbe of a shrew  
Thou sayst that oyer asses horse and houndes  
They been assayed of dyuers stoundes  
As synslauers or that men them bye  
Spones stoles and alle othez husbondrye  
And so by pottes clothes and aray  
But folke of wyues make none assay  
Tyl they be weddyd toolde d otarde shrew  
And than sayst thou we wol oure byces shewe  
Thou sayst also that it displeasith me  
But if thou wylt prerse my beaute  
And but thou poure alday in my face  
And clepe me fayre dame in euery place  
And but thou make a fest that ilke day  
That I was born and me fresshe and gay  
And but thou do to my nozpece honoure  
And to my chambre within my boure  
And to my faders folke and myn alyes  
Thou sayst thou olde barrelle ful of lyes  
And also for that oure apprentice Jankyn  
For his crispe herys shynnyng as golde fyne  
And for he squyreth me bothe by and down  
yet hast thou caught a false suspencion



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

I Wyl him nat though thou Were dede to morowe  
But tel me this why hydest thou With sorowe  
The keyes of thy cheste a wey fro me  
As wele it is my gode as thyn parde  
What wenyst thou to make an ydiote of oure dame  
Now By that lorde that clepyd is saynt Jame  
Thou shalt nat both though thou Were wode  
Be mayster of my body and of my gode  
That one thou shalt forgo magre thyn eyen  
What nedith the of me to enquire or pryen  
I trowe thou woldest loke me in thy chest  
Thou sholdest say gode Wyf go where ye lyst  
Take poure disporte I Wylleue no takes  
I knowe you for a true Wyf dame Alis  
We loue no man that takith kepe or charge  
Where that we go we wol be at oure large  
Of al maner men y blessid moot he be  
The Wyse Astrologgen dan protholome  
That sayeth right thus in his almegeest  
Of alle men his Wyf dome is the best  
That reckith nat who hath the worlde in honde  
By this prouerbe thou shalt vnderstonde  
Haue thou ynough what dar the reche or care  
Hou merely that othez folkes fare  
For certis olde dotardes By poure leue  
ye shal haue quente ynogh at eue  
For he is to grete a negart that wol werne  
A man to light a candel at his lantern  
He shal neuiz haue the lesse light parde  
Haue thou ynough thou dar nat pleyne the  
Thou sayst also if that we make vs gay  
With clothing or With precious aray  
That it is peryl of oure chastite

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And with sorowe thou must enforcen the  
And say these wordes in the apostoles name  
In habyte made with chastite and shame  
ye women shal appareyلة you quod he  
And nat in tressed here and riche perre  
As perles ne with golde ne clothes riche  
After thy texte ne after thy rubryche  
I wyl nat worche as moche as a knat  
Thou sayst thus I walke oute as a cat  
But who so wol senge the cattes shyn  
Than wyl the cat duelle in his in  
And if the cattes shyn be slyke and gay  
She wol nat duelle in his house half a day  
But forth she wol or any day be dawed  
To she we her shyn and go a catirwa wid  
This is to say if I be gay sir shrewe  
I wol renne oute my bozel for to she we  
Spr olde foole what helpith the to espyen  
Thougth thou pley argus with his hundreth eyen  
To be my warde corps as he may best  
In feyth he shal nat kepe me but me lyst  
yet coude I make his berde so mote I the  
Thou sayst eke that there be thynges thre  
The whiche thinges troublen al the erthe  
And that no wight may endure the ferthe  
O leue sir shrewe Jesus short thy lyf  
yet prechest thou and sayst an hateful wyf  
Rehned is for one of these myschaunces  
Been there now none other resembлаunces  
That may be lyke youre parables vnto  
But if a sely wyf be one of tho  
Thou lyknest eke a womannys loue to helle  
To bareyn londe there water may nat duelle



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Thou lphnest bseke also to Wylde fyre  
The more it Brennyth the more it hath desire  
To consume every thyng that Brent Wolde be  
Thou sayst right as Wormys shenden a tre  
Right so a Wyf dystropeþ her husbonde  
This knowen they that been to Wpues bonde  
Lorpynges right thus as ye haue vndrestonde  
Bare I styfly myn olde husbondes on honde  
That thus they sayde in their dronknesse  
And alle was fals but as I toke Wytnesse  
Of Jankyn and of myn nece also  
O lord the pyne I dyd them and the wo  
Ful gyltles by goddes swete pyne  
For as an horse I coude bte and whpyne  
I coude playne though I were in the gylt  
Or elles I hadde oft tymes be spylt  
Who so cometh first to the mylle first he trynt  
I playned first so were oure werres stynt  
They were ful glade for to excuse them blyue  
Of thing whiche they neuiz agylted their lyue  
Of wenches wolde I bere them ful soze on honde  
Whan that for suche vnneþ myght they stonde  
yet tikkled I his hert for that he  
wende that I of him had so grete cheerte  
I swore that alle my walkyng oute by nyght  
was for to spy wenches that he dyght  
Vndre that coloure had I many a mirthe  
for al suche thyng was gyue vs in oure birthe  
Discepte wepyng spynnynng god hath geue  
To women kyndly while that they lyue  
And thus of one thing I may auaunte me  
At the ende I haue the bettre in eche degre  
By slepyght or force or by som maner thyng

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Or by contynual murmure or grutchyng  
Nameley a bedde hadde they my schauce  
There wolde I chynge and do them no plesauce  
I wolde no lengere a bedde abyde  
If that I felt his arme ouir my syde  
Tyl he hadde made his raunson vnto me  
Than wolde I suffre him do his nycte  
And therfore euery man this tale I telle  
Wyn who so may for alle is for to selle  
With empty hondes men may no haukes lure  
For Wynnyng wolde I alle his lyst endure  
And make me than a feyned appetyte  
And yet in Bacon hadde I neuir delyte  
That made me that euir I wolde them chynge  
For though the pope hadde sitten them besyde  
I wolde nat spare them at theire owne borde  
For by my trouthe I quytte them euery worde  
As so helpe me god omnyppotent  
Though I right now sholde make my testament  
I owe them nat one worde that it nys quytte  
I brought it so aboute by my wytte  
That they must pene it by al for the beste  
Or elles hadde we neuir be in reste  
For though he lokyd as wyfde as a yowyn  
yet shulde he fayle of his conclusioun  
Than wolde I say gode leef take kepe  
How mekely lokith wyfkyng oure shepe  
Come nez my spouse let me ba thy cheke  
ye sholde be al pacient and meke  
And haue a swete spyced conscience  
Sithen ye so speke of Jobbes pacience  
Suffreth alwey sithen ye can so wele preche  
And but ye do certayne we wol pou teche



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

It is fayre a man to haue his wyf in pees  
One of vs two must bowe doutles  
And sithen a man is euir more resonable  
Than a woman is ye must be sufferable  
What ayleth you to gruche and grone  
It is for ye wolde haue my quente alone  
Why take it so haue it euerydele  
Petyr I shrewe you but ye loue it wele  
For if I wolde selle my bele chose  
I coude walke as freshe as a rose  
But I wol hepe it for youre owne tothe  
ye be to blame by god I say you sothe  
Suche maner wordes hadde we on honde  
Now wol I speke of my fourth husbonde  
in my fourth husbonde was a reueloure  
This is to say he hadde a paramoure  
And I was pong and ful of ragery  
Styborn and stronge and plyant as a py  
Tho coude I daunce vnto an harpe smale  
And syng p wys as any nyghtyngale  
Whan I hadde dronke a draught of swete wyne  
Petullius the foule chorle the swyne  
That with a staf beraft his wyf her lyf  
For she dranke wyne. and I hadde be his wyf  
He sholde nat haue daunted me from drynke  
And after wyne on Venus must I thynke  
And also sykez as colde engendreth hayle  
A licorous mouthe must haue a lycherous tayle  
In woman bynolent is no defence  
This knowen lechoures by experience  
But lord Cryst whan it remembreth me  
Upon my pouthe and on my iolyte  
It tyklyth me aboute my herte rote

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Unto this day it doth myn herte bote  
That I haue hadde my worlde as in my tyme  
But age alas that al wol enuenym  
Hath me beraft my Beaute and my pythe  
Let go fare wele the deupl go ther with  
The floure is go ther nys no more to telle  
The Brey as I best may now must I selle  
Now to be right mery Wyl I fonde  
Now Wyl I telle of my fourth husbonde  
i     say he hadde a grete dyspyte  
      That I in any other hadde dyspyte  
But he was quytte by god and by seynt Iose  
I made him of the same wode a troce  
Nat of my body in no foule manere  
But certaynly I made folke suche there  
That in his owne grece I made him frye  
For angre and for berz yelousye  
By god in erthe I was his purgatory  
For whiche I hope his soule be in glorie  
For god it wote he sat ful ofte and song  
Whan that his sho ful bytterly him wronge  
Ther was no wight saue god and he that Wylst  
In many wyse hou soze I him tWylst  
He dyed whan I cam fro ierusalem  
And lyeth y graue vndre the rode beem  
Al is his tombe nat so curius  
As was the sepulcre of him Darius  
Whiche that appelles wrought so subtelly  
It is but wast to burye him preciously  
Let him fare wele god yene his soule gode rest  
He is now in his graue and leyde in his chest  
n     Ow of my fyfte husbonde Wyl I telle  
      God let his soule neuir come in helle



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And yet was he to me moost shrewe  
That fele I on my rybbes alle by rewe  
And eniz shalle vnto myn endyng day  
But in oure bedde he was ful fresshe and gay  
And therewithalle he coude so wele me glose  
Whan that he wolde haue my bele chose  
That though he hadde bette me on euery bone  
He coude wynne my loue agayne anone  
I trowe I loued him best for that he  
Was of his loue so daungerous vnto me  
We women haue if that I shal nat lye  
In this matere a queynte fantesye  
Wayte what thyng we may nat ryghtly haue  
Ther after wyl we crye alday and craue  
Forbede vs thyng and desiren we  
Prees on vs fast and than wol we fle  
With daunger better we alle oure chaffare  
Grete prees at market makith dere ware  
And to grete chepe is holden a lytel pryce  
This knowith euery woman that is wyse  
In my fyfte husbonde god his soule blesse  
Whiche I toke for loue and no richesse  
He somtyme was a clerke of Wyenforde  
And hadde left scole and went at home to borde  
With my gossop tho duellyng in oure toun  
God haue her soule her name was alysoun  
She knewe my hert and eke my pryuete  
Bettyr than oure parisshe preeft so moot I the  
To her be wyped I my counseyll alle  
For hadde myn husbonde pyssed agens a walle  
Or do a thyng that he sholde haue coost his lyf  
To her and also to a nother worthy wyf  
And to my nece whiche that I loued wele

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

I wolde haue tolde his counseyl euerydele  
And so I dyd ful ofte god it wote  
That made his face ful ofte rede and hote  
For verry shame and blamed him selue that he  
Hadde tolde to me so grete a pyppite  
And so besyl that onys in a lente  
So ofte tyme I to my gossop went  
For euir I loued to be gay alwey  
And for to walke in Marche Apryl and May  
Fro house to house to here of sondry tales  
That Iankyn clerke and my gossop Dame alys  
And I my self into the feldes went  
My husbonde was at london al that lent  
I hadde the bettre leysur for to pley  
And for to see and eke for to be sey  
Of rusty folke what wylst I where my grace  
Was shapen for to be or in what place  
Therefore I made my bysitaciouns  
To bygyles and to processions  
To prechynge eke and to pylgramages  
To pleyes of myracles and to mariages  
And weryd upon my gay scarlet gytes  
These wormes ne these mogghes ne these mytes  
Upon my parel frayde them neuir a dele  
And wotest thou why for they bere used wel  
Now wol I telle forth what happed me  
I say that in the feldes walked we  
Tyl truly that we hadde suche daliaunce  
This clerke and I that of my purueaunce  
I spake to him and sayde that he  
If I were wydowe sholde wedde me  
For certayn I say you for no bolaunce  
yet was I neuir withoute purueaunce



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Of mariatge ne othez thynges eke  
I holde a mouse herte nat worth a leke  
That hath but one hole for to stert to  
And if that faple than is al y do  
I bare him on honde he hadde enhaunced me  
My dame taught me forsothe that sotelte  
And eke I sayde I mette of him al nyght  
He wolde haue slayne me as I ley byrighthe  
And al my bidde was ful of berry blode  
But yet I hope truly ye shal do me gode  
For blode betokneth golde as I was taught  
And al was fals I dremed of him right naught  
But as I folowed ap my damps lore  
As wele of that as of othez thynges more  
And now sir let me se what sholde I sayn  
A ha by god I haue my tale agayn  
Whan that my fourth husbonde was on here  
I wepte algate and made a soyr chere  
As byues must for it is the vsage  
And with my hynchef I cleryd my visage  
But for that I was puruyde of a make  
I wepte fullytel I dar vndertake  
To chirche was my husbonde born on morowe  
With oure nyghbours that for him made sorow  
And Jankyn oure clerke was one of tho  
As helpe me god whan that I sawe him go  
After the bere me thought he hadde a peyre  
Of legges and fete so cleene and eke so fayre  
That alle my hert I pas vnto his holde  
He was I trowe twenty wynter olde  
But I was fourty if I shal say the soth  
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes toth  
Gappe tothed I was but that becam me wele

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

I hadde the prynte of seynt Venus sele  
As helpe me god I was a ful lusty one  
And fayre and riche and yong and wele begone  
And truly as my husbondes tolde me  
I hadde the best quente that myght be  
For certis I am alle fully benerian  
In felyng and in my hert is Marcian  
Venus me yaued my lust and cytherousnesse  
And Mars yaued me my sturdy hardynesse  
My ascendauunt was Taure and mars therin  
Alas alas that euil loue was synne  
I folowed ay myn inclinacioun  
By vertue of my constellacioun  
That made me that I coude nat withdraue  
My chambre of Venus fro a gode felawe  
yet haue I Martis marke vpon my face  
And also in an othez pryncy place  
For god so wysly be my saluacioun  
I clouyd neuiz by no discrecioun  
But euil folowed myn appetite  
Al were he long shorte blache or white  
I toke no hepe so that he lyked me  
How poure he was ne eke of what degre  
What sholde I say but at the monethes ende  
This ioly clerke Jankyn that was so hende  
Bath weddyd me with grete solempnyte  
And to him yaued I alle londe and fee  
That euil was yeuue me ther bifore  
But afterwarde me repented it ful soze  
He nolde suffre nothyng of my lyst  
By god he smote me onys on the lyst  
On the cheke. for I rent oute of his boke a leef  
That of the stroke myn ere wext al deaf



## The wyf of Bathes prologue

Styborne I was as is a byonesse  
And of my tunge a verȝ iangelresse  
And walke I wolde as I doon hadde biforn  
fro house to house al though he hadde it sworn  
for whiche he oft tyme wolde preche  
And me of olde Romaunces gēstes teche  
Hou the symplīcius gallus left his wyf  
And her forsoke for terme of alle his lyf  
Nat but for onys oppn heded he her say  
Lokynȝ oute of his doore vpon a day  
A nother Romayne tolde he me by name  
But for his wyf was at a someres game  
Withoute his wyttynȝ he forsoke her eke  
And than wolde he vpon his byble seke  
That ilke prouerbe of Ecclesiaste  
Where he comaundith and byddeth fast  
Men sholde nat suffre theire wyues to royle aboute  
Than wolde he say thus withouten doute  
Who so byldith his house alle of salowes  
And pryeth his blynde horse ouir the falowes  
And suffrith his wyf to seke halowes  
Is worthy to be honged on the galowes  
But al for naught I set it nat an haue  
Of al his prouerbes ne of alle his olde sawe  
Ne I wol nat of him corrected be  
I hate them that tellen my byces on to me  
And so do mo god bote of vs than I  
This made hym wode with me al vtterly  
I wolde nat forbere him in no caas  
Now wol I say you soth by seint Thomas  
Why that I rent oute of his boke a leef  
For whiche he smote me so that I was deef  
He hadde a boke that gladly both nyght and day  
t im

## The wyf of Bathes prologue

For his disporte he wolde rede alway  
He clepyd it balery and Theophraste  
At the whiche boke he lough alwey ful fast  
And eke ther was a clerke somtyme in Rome  
A cardynalle that hight seynt Jerome  
That made a boke ayenst Jonynyan  
In whiche boke ther was eke Tortulan  
Crisippus Tortala and Helowis  
That was Abbesse nat fer from Paris  
And eke the paraboles of Wyse Salamon  
Duydes art and che bokes many one  
And al these were bounde in one volume  
And euery day and night was his custume  
Whan he hadde leysur and any vacacioun  
Fro al othez worldly occupacioun  
To redyn on this boke of Wyched Wyues  
He knewe of them molettendes and lyues  
Than be of gode Wyues in the byble  
For trustith wele it is an impossible  
That any clerke wolde speke gode of Wyues  
But if it be of holy seyntes lyues  
Ne of none othez women neuiz the mo  
Who prentyd the lyoun telle me who  
By god if women hadde wryten stozes  
As clerkes haue within theire Dratozys  
They wolde haue wryten of men more Wychedness  
Than alle the marke of Adam may redresse  
The children of mercury and Venus  
Been in theire workyng ful contrarious  
Mercury souyth wysdome and science  
And Venus loueth rpytte and dispence  
And for theire dyuerse disposicioun  
Eche sayleth in others exaltacioun



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

As thus god wote Mercury is desolate  
In piscis Where Venus is exaltate  
And Venus sayleth there Mercury is rey sed  
Therfore Women of no clerke is preysed  
The clerke whan he is olde and may naught do  
Of Venus werkes nat worth his olde sho  
Than sytteth he down and wryteth in his dotage  
That Women can nat kepe theire mariage  
But now to purpos why I tolde the  
That I was beten for a boke parde  
Upon a nyght Jankyn that was oure spre  
Redde on his boke as he sat by the fyre  
Of Eue first that for her wyckednesse  
Was al mankynde brought to wrechednesse  
For whiche that Je su criste him selue was slayne  
That bought vs with his hert blode agayne  
To here expresse of Women may ye fynde  
That woman was the losse of alle mankynde  
Tho redde he me hou Sampson lost his heris  
Slepyng. his lemman kytte them with her sheres  
Through whiche treason lost he bothe his eyen  
Tho redde he me if that I shal nat lye  
Of hercules and of his Dyanpre  
That causith him to sette him selue a fyre  
No thyng forgate he the sorow and the wo  
That socrates hadde with his wyues two  
How Byantippa cast pyssse vpon his hede  
This sely man sat styll as he were dede  
He wyped his hede nomore durst he sayn  
But or the thundre stynt there cometh rayne  
Of pasipha that was the quene of Crete  
For shrewdnesse him thought the tale swete  
If speke nomore it is a grisly thyng

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Of her horrible lust and her lychynge  
Of Cletemystra for her high lecherpe  
That falsly made her husbonde to dye  
He redde it with ful gode deuocioun  
He tolde me eke for what conclusioun  
Amphioray at Thebes lost his lyf  
My husbonde hadde a legende of his wyf  
Eriphylem that for an ouche of golde  
Hath pryuelly vnto the grekes tolde  
Where that her husbonde hyd him in a place  
For whiche he hadde at Thebes a soyr grace  
Of Pyma tolde he me and of Lucy  
They both made their husbondes for to dy  
That one for loue that othez was for hate  
Pyma her husbonde vpon an euyn late  
Enpoysond him for that she was his foo  
Lucia lykerousloued her husbond so  
For he sholde algates on her thynke  
She gaue vnto him suche a loue drynke  
That he was dede or it was at morowe  
And thus algate husbondes hadde sorowe  
Than tolde he me hou that Catumens  
Compleyned hou that fel man Arrius  
That in his gardyn growed suche a tre  
On whiche he sayde that his wyues thre  
Hanged them self for their hertes dyspytous  
O leue Brother sayde than this Arrius  
Yeue me a plante of that blissed tre  
And in my gardyn planted shal it be  
Of lattez date of wyues hath he redde  
That some haue slayne their husbondes a bedde  
And leet the lichoure dight them alle the nyght  
Whiles that the corps lay in the flore bryght



## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And som haue dryue nayles in their brayn  
Whiles that they slept & thus they haue them slayn  
Som haue yeu them popson in their drynke  
He spake more harme than herte may thynke  
And therewithalle he coude mo prouerbes  
Than in this worlde growe grasse or herbes  
Bettyr is quod he thyn habitacioun  
Be with a youn or a foule dragoun  
Than with a woman brynng for to chyde  
Bettyr is quod he high in his roof abyde  
Than with an angry wyf down in the house  
They be so wycked and so contrarious  
They haten that their husbondes loue ay  
He sayde a woman cast her shame a way  
Whan she cast of her smoke and ferthermo  
A fayre woman but she be chaste also  
Is lyke a golde ryng on a sowes nose  
Who wolde leue or who wolde suppose  
The wo that in myn herte was and pyne  
And whan I sawe that he wolde neuiz fyne  
To rede on his corsed boke al nyght  
Al sodenly thre leys haue I plyght  
Dute of his boke right as he redde and eke  
I with my fyft so toke him on the cheke  
That in oure fyre he fyl bak warde a doun  
And bp he stert as doth a wode youn  
And with his fiste he smote me on the hede  
That in the floze I ley as were dede  
And whan he sawe hou styl that I lay  
He was agast and wolde haue fledde a way  
Tyl at the last I oute of my swoune abraide  
O hast thou slayn me false theef I sayde  
And for my londe thus hast thou muredre me

## The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Wher I be dede yet wol I onys kyss the  
And nere he cam and kneled fayre a doun  
And sayde dere sustre swete Alisoun  
As helpe me god I shal the neuir smyte  
That I haue do it is thy self to wyte  
Forpene it me and that I the beseke  
And yet eft sones I hytte him on the cheke  
And sayde theef thus moche I am be wreke  
Now wol I dye I may no lengere speke  
But at the last with moche care and wo  
We syl accorded by oure selfyn two  
He paue me the brydel in myn honde  
To haue the gouernaunce of house and londe  
And after of his tonge and of his honde also  
And made him brenne his boke anone tho  
And than whan I hadde goten vnto me  
The maystre and eke the soueraynte  
And that he sayde myn owne true wyf  
Doth as you lyst al the terme of youre lyf  
Kepe thy honoure and eke myn estate  
And after that day we hadde neuir debate  
God helpe me so I was to him as kynde  
As any wyf from Denmarke vnto ynde  
And also true and so was he to me  
I pray to god that sytteth in magesty  
So blesse his soule for his mercy dere  
Now wol I say my tale if ye wol here  
t He frere lough whan he hadde herd al this  
Now dame quod he so haue I ioye and blis  
This is a long preambe of a tale  
And whan the Sompnoure herde the frere tale  
Lo quod the Sompnoure for goddes armes two  
A frere wol entromette him euir mo



## The wyf of Bathes prologue

To gode men a fflye and eke a frere  
Wol falle in euery mannys disshie and matere  
What spekest thou of preambulacioun  
What amble or trotte go pyssse or sytte a doun  
Thou lettest oure disporte in this matere  
ye Wylt thou so sir Sompnoure quod the frere  
Now by my fayth I shalle or that I go  
Telle of a sompnoure suche a tale or two  
That alle folke shal laugh in this place  
Now elles frere I beshrewe thy face  
Quod this Sompnoure, and I beshrewe me  
But if I telle tales two or thre  
Of freres or that I come to Spydnyngbourn  
That I shal make the soze for to morne  
For wele I woot thy pacience is gone  
Dure hoost cryde pease and that anone  
And sayde let the woman telle her tale  
ye faren as folkes that dronke been of ale  
Do dame telle forth poure tale and that is best  
Al redy sir quod she right as you lyst  
If I haue licence of this worthy frere  
yes dame quod he telle forth and I wol here

Here endith the wyf of Bathes prologue  
And here begynneth her Tale

i    In olde dages of kyng Arthoure  
Of whiche Britons speke grete honoure  
Al was this lond fulfyllid of fayr ye  
The elphe quene with her ioly company  
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede  
This was the olde opunyon as I rede  
I speke of many an hundred yeres ago

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

But nowe can noman se none elphes mo  
For now the grete charite and prayers  
Of lymptoures and other holy freres  
That serchen euery londe and euery streme  
As thycke as motes in the sonne beame  
Blessyng halles chambers kychens and boures  
Cyttes borughes castelles and high toures  
Thorpes barnes shepens and depres  
This makith that there be no feryes  
For there as wont was to walke an elphe  
There walkith now the lymptoure him self  
In vndermeles and in moornynges  
And sayth his matyns and his holy thynges  
As he goth forth in his lymptacioun  
Women may now go sauely by and down  
Vndre euery busshe and vndre euery tre  
There is none other incubus but he  
And he ne wolde do them any dishonoure  
And so besyl that this kyng Arthoure  
Hadde in his house a lusty bachelez  
That on a day cam rydyng fro the ryuere  
And happed that allone as he was born  
He sawe a mayde walkyng him biforn  
Of whiche mayde anone magre hez hede  
By verry force he beraft hez maydenhede  
For whiche oppressioun was suche clamoure  
And suche pursute vnto vnto kyng Arthoure  
That dampned was this knyght for to be dede  
By course of lawe and sholde haue lost his hede  
Parauenture suche was the statute tho  
But that the quene and other ladies moo  
So longe prayde the kyng of grace  
Tyl he hislyf graunted in that place



## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

And yane him to the quene alle at her wyllle  
To chese whether she wolde him saue or spylle  
The quene thanked the kyng with alle her myghte  
And after this thus spake she to the knyght  
Whan she sawe her tyme spon a day  
Thou stondest yet quod she in suche aray  
That of thy lyf yet hast thou no surete  
I graunt thy lyf if thou canst telle me  
What thing it is that women moost desiren  
Be ware and kepe thy necke from iren  
And if thou canst nat telle it anone  
I shal the yere leue yet for for to gone  
A twelue month and a day to seche and here  
An aunswere sufficiaunt in this matere  
And surete wol I haue or that thou pace  
Thy body for to yelde in this place  
Woo was this knyght and sorowfully he siggheth  
But he may nat do alle as him lyketh  
And at the last he chose him for to wende  
And come ageyn right at the yeres ende  
With suche aunswere as god wolde him puruey  
And takith his leue and wendith forth his wey  
He sekith euery house and euery place  
Where as he hopith for to fynde grace  
To wytte what thyng women loued moost  
But he coude aryuen in no coost  
There as he myght fynde in this matere  
Two creatures accordyng in fere  
Some sayd women loued best richesse  
Some sayde honoure som sayde iolynesse  
Som sayde riche aray som sayde lust a bedde  
And ofte tymes to be wydowe and to be wedde  
Som sayde that we be in hert moost eased

what thing women moost desiren to know  
yt wasseth for in the p. 100  
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## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Whan we be flatred and ypleased  
He goth ful nygh the soth I wol nat lye  
A man shal best wyne be with flaterye  
And with attendaunce and with besynesse  
Been we yplemed both more and lesse  
And some sayd that we wolde loue best  
For to be fre and do right as vs lyst  
And that noman repreue us of oure byce  
But say that we be wyse and nothing nyce  
For truly ther is none of us alle  
If any wight wol cleaue us on the galle  
That we nyl lyke for that he sayth us sothe  
Assay quod he shal fynde it what it doth  
For be we neuiz so vicious with ynne  
We wolde beholde wyse and cleen oute of synne  
And some sayde grete deylte haue we  
For to beholde stable and eke secre  
And in one purpos stedfastly to duelle  
And nat to be wrape that men us telle  
But that tale is nat worth a rake stele  
Parde we women can nothing hele  
Wytnes on myda. Wol ye here the tale  
Tuide among othez thinges smale  
Sayde myda hadde vndre his long heres  
Growthyng bpon his hede two asses erys  
The whiche byce he hadde as he best myghte  
Fulle subtelly from euery manns sight  
That saue his wyf they wist it nomo  
Belouyd her most and trustyd her also  
He prayed her that to no maner creature  
She shoulde telle of his foule disfigure  
She swore him that for alle the worlde to wyne  
She nolde do that belong ne synne



## The wyf of Bathes Tale

To make her husbonde to haue so foule a name  
She wolde it nat for her owne shame  
But neuirthelesse she thought that she dyde  
That she so long sholde a counseyl hyde  
She thoughte it was so soze aboute her herte  
That nedes some worde her must a stert  
And sithen she durst telle it to no man  
Doun by the marsshe fast by she ran  
Tyl she cam there her hert was in fyre  
And as a bytoure blombyth in the myre  
She leyde her mouthe vnto the water doun  
Be wrey me nat thou water with thy soun  
Quod she. to the I telle it and to noma  
My husbonde hath long asshes erys two  
Nowe is myn hert al hole now is it oute  
I myght no lengere kepe it oute of doute  
Here may ye se though we a tyme abyde  
yet oute it must we can no counseyle hyde  
The remenaunt of the tale if ye wol here  
Redith Dydde and there ye may it lere  
This knyght of Whom my tale is specially  
Whan that he sawe he myght nat come therby  
This is to say what women louen moost  
Within his brest so soroufulle was his goost  
But home he goth he myght nat sojourne  
The day was come that homwarde must he tourne  
And in his wey as happed him to ryde  
In alle his care vndre a forest syde  
Where as he sawe vpon a daunce go  
Of ladies foure and twenty and yet mo  
Towarde whiche daunce he drewe ful perne  
In hope that he sholde som wysdom lern  
But certaynly or that he cam fully there

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Danysshed was this daunce he nyght where  
No creature sawe he that barelyf  
Sawe on the grene he sawe sytting a wyf  
A fouler wight ther myght no man deuyse  
Agayn this knyght this olde wyf gan ryse  
And sayde sir knyght here forth lyth no wey  
But telle me what ye seke by youre fay  
Paraventure it may the better be  
Thise olde folke can moche thyng quod she  
My leue modre quod this knyght certayn  
I nam but dede but if that I can sayn  
What thyng it is that women moost desire  
Coude ye me wysshe I wolde quyte wele youre hire  
Prignt me thy trouthe here in my honde quod she  
The next thyng that I requyre the  
Thou shalt it do if it lye in thy myght  
And I wol telle it you or it be nyght  
Haue here my trouthe quod the knyght I graunt  
Than quod she I dar wele make auunte  
Thy lyf is sauf for I wol stonde therby  
Upon my lyf the quene wol say as I  
Let see whiche is the proudest of them alle  
That werith on othez kyrcchief or calle  
That dar say nay of that I wol the teche  
Let vs go forth withoute more speche  
Tho rowned she a pystel in his ere  
And badde him be glade and haue no fere  
When they be comen to the courte this knyght  
Sayde he kept his day as he hadde sight  
And redy was his answer as he sayde  
Ful many a noble wyf and many a mayde  
And many a wydowe for that they be wyse  
The quene her self sittynge as iustise



## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Assembled been this aunswere for to here  
And afterwarde this knyght was bodeñ tappare  
To euery wight was comaunded silence  
And that the knyght sholde tel in audience  
What thyng that worldy women loue best  
This knyght stode nat styl as doth a beest  
But to his question anone aunswerde  
With manly voyce that al the courte it herde  
My liege lady than general quod he  
Women desire to haue soueraynte  
As wele of their husbondes as of their loue  
And for to be in maystrye aboue  
This is youre moost desire though ye me kylle  
Doth as you lyst I am here at youre wyl  
In al the courte ne was ther wyf ne mayde  
Ne wydowe that contraried that he sayde  
But sayde he was worthy to haue his lyl  
And with that worde by jert this olde wyf  
Whiche that the knyght fonde syttyng on the grene  
Mercy quod she my souerayne lady quene  
Or that youre courte departe as do me right  
I taught this aunswere vnto this knyght  
For whiche he pleyght me his trouthe there  
The first thyng I wolde him requere  
He wolde it do if it lay in his myght  
Bifore this courte than pray I the sir knyght  
Quod she. that thou me take vnto thy wyf  
For wele thou wotest that I haue sauid thy lyl  
If I swere fals swere nay vpon thy fey  
The knyght aunswerd allas and wel a wey  
I wote right wele that suche was my best  
For goddes loue chees a newe request  
Take alle my gode and let my body go

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Nay than quod she I shrewe vs bothe two  
For though that I be foule olde and poure  
I wol nat for al the metal and the oure  
That bndre the grounde lyth or aboue  
But I thy wyf were and eke thy loue  
My loue quod he nay but my dampnacioun  
Alas that euir any of my nacioun  
So foule sholde euir disperaged be  
But al for naught the ende is thus that he  
Constreyned was nedes must he her wedde  
And take his olde wyf and go to bedde  
Now wolde some men say parauenture  
For my negligence I do no cure  
To telle you the ioye and alle the arzaie  
That at the fest was that ilke day  
To whiche thyng shortly I aunswere shalle  
I say ther was no fest ne ioye at alle  
There nas but heuynes and moche sorowe  
For pryuelly he wedded her by the morowe  
And al day after hydde him as an owle  
So wo was him his wyf loke so foule  
Grete was the wo that the knyght had in thought  
Whan he was with his wyf a bedde y brought  
He waluethe and he turneth to and fro  
His olde wyf lay symplyng euir mo  
And sayde o dere husbonde benedicite  
Fariþ every knyght thus with his wyf as ye  
Is this the lawe of knyng Arthours hous  
Is every knyght of his loue so daungerous  
I am poure owne loue and eke poure wyf  
I am she whiche saued hath poure lyf  
And certis yet I dyd you neuiz bryght  
Why fare ye thus with me the first nyght



## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

ye fare lyke a man hadde lost his wytte  
What is my gylte for goddes loue tel me it  
And it shal be amended if that I may  
Amendyd quod this knyght allas nay nay  
It wol nat be amended neuir the moo  
Thou arte so lothly and so olde also  
And therto comen of solowe a kynde  
That lytel wondre is though I walow and wynde  
So wolde god quod he myn herte wolde brest  
Is this quod she the cause of poure vnrest  
ye certayn quod he no wondre it is  
Now sir quod she I coude amende alle this  
If that me lyst or it be daies thre  
So wele ye myght bere you vnto me  
But for ye speke of suche gentylnesse  
As is descended oute of olde riches  
That therfore ye shulde be gentylmen  
Suche erzogaunce is nat worth an henne  
Pohe who is moost vertuouus alwey  
Pryuy and apert and moost entendyth ay  
To do the gentylest dedes that he can  
Take him for the gentilest gentylman  
Cryste wol we clayme of him oure gentylnesse  
Nat of oure eldres for theire olde richesse  
For though they yeue vs alle theire heritage  
For whiche we clayme to be of hight parage  
yet may they nat bequeth for no thyng  
To none of vs theire vertuouus luyng  
That made them gentylmen called to be  
And badde vs folowe them in suche degre  
wele can the wise poete of fflorence  
That hight daunte speke of this sentence  
Po in suche maner ry me is dauntes tale

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Ful selden vp ryseth by his braunches smale  
Proues of man for god of his godenes  
Wol that of him we clayme oure gentylnes  
For of oure elders may we nothyng clayme  
But temporalle thyng that may hurte and mayne  
Eke euery wight wote this as wele as I  
If gentylnes were plaunted naturally  
Vnto a certayn lynage down the lyne  
Pryuy and apert than wol they neuir fyne  
To do of gentylnes the feyre office  
They myght do no belony or byce  
Take fyre and bere it in the derkest house  
Bitwyte this and the mount of Caucasus  
And let men shytte the dozes and go thenne  
yet wol the fyre as fayre ly and brenne  
As twenty thousand men myght it beholde  
His office naturally ay wol he holde  
Vp peryl of my lyf tyl that it dye  
Here may ye se how that gentrye  
Is nat annexed to possessioun  
Suche folke ne doth there operacioun  
Alwey as doth the fyre lo in his kynde  
For god it wote men may ful ofte fynde  
A lordes sonne do shame and belony  
And he that wol haue pryce of his gentrye  
For he was boyn of a gentyl house  
And hadde his elders noble and vertuons  
And wyl him self do no gentyl dedes  
Ne folowe his gentyl auncetours that dede is  
He is nat gentyl he he duke he he erle  
Fy byleyns synful dedes make a cherle  
For gentylnesse nys but the renome  
Of thyng auncetoures for their high bounte



## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Whiche is a straunge thyng to thy persone  
Thy gentylnes cometh fro god alone  
Than cometh oure berry gentylnes of grace  
It was no thyng biquedyn vs with oure place  
Thynkyst how noble as sayth Valerius  
Was that Romayn Tullius Hostilius  
That oute of pouerte roose to high noblesse  
Redith Seneke and redith eke Boece  
There shal ye se expres that no drede is  
That he is gentyl that doth gentyl dedes  
And therfore leue husbonde thus I conclude  
Were it that myn auncetoures were rude  
yet may the high god and so hope I  
Graunte me grace to lye vertuously  
Than am I vertuous when I begyn  
To lye vertuously and do a wey synne  
And there as ye of pouerte me repreue  
That high god on whome holy we beleue  
In wyful pouerte chees to lede his lyf  
And certis euery man mayden and wyf  
May vnderstonde that Iesus heuyn kyng  
Ne wolde nat chese a byciousse luyng  
Glade pouerte is a ful honest thyng certayn  
This wol Seneke and othez clerkes sayn  
Who so that holdith him payed of his pouert  
I holde him ryche and he hadde nat a shert  
He that couetith he is a ful poure wight  
For he wolde haue that is nat in his myght  
But he that naught hath ne couetith to haue  
Is riche al though ye holde him but a knaue  
Berry pouert is synne propirly  
Iuuenal spekith therof fulle merely  
The poure man when he goth by the wey

## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Biſore the theups he may ſynge and pley  
Pouert is hateful gode and as I geſſe  
A fulle grete bryngez oute of beſynneſſe  
A grete amender eke of ſapience  
To him that takith it in pacience  
Pouerte is this al though it ſe me elenge  
Poſſeſſioun that noman wolde gladly chalenge  
Pouerte ful ofte whan a man is low  
Makith his god and eke him ſelf to knowe  
Pouerte a ſpectakyl is as thynkith me  
Through whiche he may his berzy frendes ſe  
And therfore ſir ſithen therein ye be greued  
Of my pouerte let me nomore be repreynd  
Now ſir there as of elde ye repreue me  
And certis ſir though none auctoryte  
Were in the boke ye gentylles of honour  
Say that men ſholde an olde wight fauoure  
And clepe it fader for theire gentylneſſe  
And auctoures ſhal I fynde as I geſſe  
Now there as ye ſay I am foule and orde  
Than drede ye nat to be made cochorde  
For fylthe elde and foule ſo mot I the  
Been grete wardeyns bpon chaſtite  
But natheles ſithen I know youre delyte  
I ſhal fulfylle youre worldly appetyte  
Thes now quod ſhe one of theſe thynges twey  
To haue me olde and foule tyl that I dey  
And be to you a true humble wyf  
And neuir you diſpleaſe in alle my lyf  
Or elles ye ſhal haue me yong and feyre  
And take youre auenture of the reypeyre  
That to youre houſe ſhalbe bicauſe of me  
Or in ſome othez place may wele be



## The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Now chees whether that ye lyketh  
This knyght ayseth him and syketh  
But at the last he sayd in this manere  
My lady my loue my wyf so dere  
I put me fully in youre gouernaunce  
Chese it youre self whiche may be moze plessaunce  
And moost honoure to you and me also  
I do no force the whether of the two  
But as you lyketh it suffiseth to me  
Than haue I gotte of you the mastrye quod she  
Sithen I may chese and gouerne you as me lyst  
ye certis wyf quod he I holde it for the best  
Wys me quod she we be no lengere wrothe  
For by my trouthe I wol be to you bothe  
That is to say bothe fayre and eke gode  
I pray to god that I must sterue wode  
But I to you be also gode and true  
As euir was wyf sithen the worlde was newe  
And but I be to morowe as fayre to sene  
As any lady empreffe or quene  
That is betwixte the este and the west  
Doth with my lyf and deth as ye lyst  
And so they slepte tyl it was morowe gray  
And then she sayde whan it was day  
Cast by the curteyn loke how it is  
And whan the knyght sawe verely al this  
That she so fayre was and so yong therto  
For iope he kynt her in his armes two  
His herte was bathed in a bathe of blis  
A thousand tyme arowe he gan her kys  
She obeyed him in every thyng  
That myght do him plessaunce or lykynge  
And thus they lyue vnto theire lyues ende

## The Freres prologue

And parfyte loye and Jesu criste vs sende  
Busbondes meke yong and fresshe abedde  
And grace to ouirlyue them that we wedde  
And eke I pray Jesus short their lyues  
That wol nat be gouerned by their wyues  
And olde and angry nygarden in dispence  
God sende them sone a verzy pestilence

Here endith the tale of the Wyf of Bath  
And here begynneth the Freres prologue

**T**his noble lymptoure this worthy freze  
He made alwey a maner louryng there  
Upon the sompnoure but for honestye  
No byleyns worde as yet to him spake he  
But at the last he sayde vnto the wyf  
Now dame quod he god yeue you right gode lyf  
Ye haue here touched also moot I thee  
In scole matere a ful grete disticulyte  
Ye haue sayde moche gode thyng right wele I sey  
But dame as here as ye ryden by the way  
Vs nedith nat to speke but of game  
And lete auctoritees on goddes name  
To prechyng and to scole of clertye  
And if it lyke vnto this company  
I wol you of a Sompnoure tel a game  
Parde ye may wele knowe by the name  
That of a sompnoure may no gode be sayde  
I pray that none of you be euyl appayed  
A sompnoure is a ryner by and down  
With maundmentes for fornycacioun  
And is y bete at euery towne sende  
Dure hoost than spake a sire ye sholde be hende



## The freres Tale

And curteys as a man of poure astate  
In company we wol haue no debate  
Tellith poure tale and let the sompnoure be  
Nay quod the sompnoure let him say by me  
What so him lyst whan it cometh to my lot  
By god I shal him quyte euery grot  
I shal him telle whiche a grette honoure  
It is to be a flaterynge lymptoure  
And of many othez manez cryme  
Whiche nedith nat to reherce at this tyme  
And his office I shalle him telle y wys  
Dure hoost aunsWerde peas nomore of this  
And after this he sayde vnto the frere  
Telle forth poure tale myn owne mayster dere

Here endith the freres prologue  
And begynneth his tale



Bylom ther was duellyng in my countre  
 W An archedekyn a man of high degre  
 That boldly dyd wele execucioun  
 In punysshynge of fornycacion  
 Of wycheecraft and eke of baudrye  
 Of diffamacioun and auoutre  
 Of chirche reuys and of testametes  
 Of contracte and of lacke of sacramentes  
 Of vsury and eke of symonye also  
 But certis lichoures dyd he gretest woo  
 They sholde synge if that they were hent  
 And smale tythers also were foule shent  
 If any persone bpon them pleyne  
 There myght a sterte no pecunyal peyne  
 For smale tythes and smale offryng  
 He made the people ful pytously to synge  
 For oz the bisschop caught them with his hohe  
 They were in the Archedekyns boke  
 And than hadde he through his iurisdiction  
 Powe of them to do ful correction  
 He hadde a sompnoure redy to his honde  
 A slyghter boy was none in Engloude  
 For sotelly he hadde his espayle  
 That taught him where he myght auayle  
 He coude spare of lechoures one oz two  
 To teche him to foure and twenty moo  
 For though the sompnoure wode were as an hare  
 To telle his harlottre I wol nat spare  
 For we be oute of his correccioun  
 They haue of vs no iurisdiction  
 Ne neuir shalle terme of alle theire lynes  
 Petyr so be women of the styrys  
 Quod the sompnoure. put oute of oure cure



## The Freres Tale

Peas With myschauunce and With mysauenture  
Sayde oure hoost and let him telle his tale  
Now telle forth though the Sompnoure gale  
He spareth nat myn owne mapster dere  
This fals theef this sompnoure quod the frere  
Had alwey ha wdes redy to his honde  
As any ha wke is to the lure in Englonde  
That tolde him alle the secre that they knewe  
For theire acqueyntaunce was nat come of newe  
They were al his approuers pryuelly  
He toke him self a grette profet therby  
His mapster knewe nat alwey what he way  
Withouten maundementes a leude man  
He coude sompne on peyne of cristes curse  
And they were glade for to fylle his purse  
And make him grette festes at the nase  
And right as Judas had purses smale  
And was a theef right suche a theef was he  
His mapster hath but half his duete  
He was if I shal yeue him his laude  
A theef a Sompnoure and eke a baude  
He hadde eke wenches at his retenue  
That whether sir Robert or sir Hue  
Or Jacke or Rauf or who so that it were  
That ley by them they tolde him in his ere  
Thus were the wenchys and he of one assent  
And he wolde set a feyned maundment  
And sompne them to the chaptre bothe two  
And peles the man and let the wenche go  
Than wolde he say frende I shal for thy sake  
Do stryke the oute of oure lettres blake  
The thez nomore as in this caas trauayle  
I am thy frende there I may the auayle

Certayn he knewe of Brybours many mo  
 Than possible is to telle in yeres two  
 For in this worlde nys dogge for the bowe  
 That can an hurte dere from an hole knowe  
 Better than this Sompnoure knewe a slygh lychour  
 Or auoutrez or elies any paramoure  
 And for that was the frute of alle his rent  
 Therfore on it he sette alle his entent  
 And so besyl that onys vpon a day  
 This sompnoure was euir waytynng his pray  
 For to sompne an olde wyf a rebbybe  
 Freynng a cause for he wolde haue a brybe  
 It happed that he sawe biforn him ryde  
 A gay yeman vndre a forest syde  
 A bolwe he bare and arrowes bright and kene  
 He hadde vpon him a courtpe of grene  
 An hat vpon his hede with strenges blake  
 Siz quod the sompnoure hayle and wele y take  
 Welcome quod he and euery gode felaw  
 Whydre rydest thou vndre this grene wode shaw  
 Saide this yoman wylt thou ferze to day  
 This sompnoure aunswerde and sayde nay  
 Here fast by quod he is myn entent  
 To ryden for to ryse by al the rent  
 That longith now to my lordes duete  
 Art thou than a baille. ye quod he  
 He ne durst for belony and shame  
 Say that he was a sompnoure for the name  
 Depardeny quod this yeman dere brotther  
 Thou art a baille and I am a nother  
 I am vnknowen now in this countre  
 Of thyn acqueyntaunce than I pray the  
 Andeke of Brederhode if that thou lyst



## The Freres Tale

I haue golde and syluer in my chyst  
If that the happith to come in oure shyre  
al shalbe thyn right as thou wylt desire  
Gramercy quod this Sompnoure by my feyth  
Eueriche in others honde his trouthe he leyth  
For to be sworne brethern tyl they dey  
In daliaunce they ryde forth and pley  
This Sompnoure whiche was ful of Jangelis  
As ful of benym been the se berzy anglis  
And euir enquiryng vpon every thing  
Brother quod he where is nowe youre duellyng  
A nother day if that I shal you seche  
This yoman him aunswerde with soft speche  
Brother quod he fer in the north countre  
Where as I hope somtyme I shal the se  
Or we departe I shal the so wele wys  
That of my house ne shalt thou neuir mys  
Now Brother quod this Sompnoure I you pray  
Theche me whiles we ryde by the way  
Sithen that ye be a bailly and so am I  
Some subtelte and tellith me feithfully  
In myn office hou I may moost wynne  
And sparith nat for conscience ne synne  
But dere Brother telle me how do ye  
Now by my trouthe dere Brother sayde he  
As I shal tel the a feythful tale  
My wages be ful streyt and ful smale  
My lord is harde to me and daungerous  
And myn office is ful labourous  
And therfore by extorsions I lyue  
Forsoth I take alle that men wol me yeue  
Algate by sight or by byoience  
From yere to yere I wynne alle my dyspence

## The Freres Tale

I can no better tel the feythfully  
Now certis quod the Sompnoure so fare I  
I spare nat to take god it wote  
But if it be to heuy or to hote  
That I may gete in counsel pryuely  
Nomore conscience of that haue I  
Nere my extorcioun I myght nat lyuen  
Ne of suche iapes wol I nat be shreuy  
Stomake ne conscience knowe I none  
I shrewe the schryttefaders euerichone  
Wele be we mette by god and by seynt Jame  
But leue Brothex tel me thy name  
Quod this Sompnoure in this meane while  
This yeman gan a lytel for to smyle  
Brothex quod he wylt thou that I the telle  
I am a feende my duellyng is in helle  
And here I ryde aboute my purchasyng  
To wytte if men wol yeue me any thyng  
To purchace is the effecte of alle my rent  
Loke hou thou rydest for alle the same entent  
To Wynne gode thou rechest neuir how  
Right so fare I for ryde wol I now  
Vnto the worldes ende for a pray  
A quod the Sompnoure benedicite what ye say  
I wende ye hadde been a yoman truly  
Ye haue a mannys shappe as wele as I  
Haue ye than a fygnre determynat  
In helle there ye be in youre astate  
May certaynly quod he there haue we none  
But whan ws lyketh we can take vs one  
Or elles make you wene we be shappe  
Somytyme lyke a man and somtyme lyke an ape  
Or lyke an aungel can I ryde or goo



## The frezes Tale

It is no wondre thyng though it be so  
A bouspe iogloure can desceyue the  
And parde yet more craft can I than he  
Why quod the sompnoure ryde ye than or gone  
In sondry shappe and nat alwey in one  
For we quod he wol be in suche fourme make  
As moost auaple is oure prayes for to take  
What makith you to haue alle this labour  
Wel many a cause leue sir Sompnoure  
Sayde this seende But al thyng hath tyme  
The day is short and it is passed pryme  
And yet ne gat I nothyng in this day  
I wol intende to wynnynge if I may  
And nat intende oure wyttes to declare  
For brother myne thy wyttes been alle to bare  
To vnderstonde al though I tolde them the  
But for thou askith why labour we  
For somtyme we be goddes instrumentes  
And meanes to do his comaundmentes  
Whan that him lyst vpon his creatures  
In dyuerse acte and in dyuerse figures  
Withoute him we haue no myght certayne  
If that him lyst to stonde there ageyn  
And somtyme at oure prayer haue we leue  
Only the body and nat the soule to greue  
Wytnes of Job whom we dyd wo  
And somtyme haue we myght on both two  
This is to say on soule and on body eke  
And somtyme we be suffred for to seke  
Vpon a man and do his soule vnrrest  
And nat his body and alle is for the best  
Whan he withstandith oure temptacioun  
It is a cause of his saluacioun

## The Frezes Tale

Al be it that it was nat oure entent  
He sholde be sauf by goddes iugement  
And somtyme we be seruaunt vnto man  
As to the Archebisschop seint Dnustan  
And to the appostel seraunt eke was I  
yet telle me quod the sompnoure feithfully  
Make ye poure bodies in suche wyse alwey  
Of elementes. the seende aunswerde nay  
Somtyme we seynen and somtyme we aryse  
With dede bodies in fele sondry wyse  
And speke as resonable fayre and wele  
As the phytonysse dyd to samuel  
And yet wol som men say it was nat he  
I do no force of poure dignyte  
But one thyng warne I the I wol nat iape  
Thou wylt wete al gates how we be shape  
Thou shalt here afterwarde my brother dere  
Come where it nedith nat of me to lere  
For thou shalt by thy owne experience  
Conne in the chapyre ride of this sentence  
Bettyr than birgyle while he was on lyue  
Or daunte also now let vs ryde helyue  
For I wol holde company with the  
Tyl it be so that thou forsake me  
Nay quod the sompnoure that shal nat betyde  
I am a pemañ that knowen am ful wyde  
My trouthe wol I holde to the as in this caas  
For though were the deuyl sathanas  
My trouth wol I holde to the my brother  
As I am sworn and eche of vs tyl othez  
For to be true brother in this caas  
And bothe we gone aboute oure purchaas  
Take thou thy parte of that men wol the yene



And I shalle myne thus may we bothe lyue  
 And if that any of vs haue more than other  
 Let him be true and parte it with his brother  
 I graunte quod the deuyl by my fay  
 And with that worde they ryden forth the wey  
 And right at an entre of a townes ende  
 To whiche that Sompnoure shope him to wende  
 They saue a carte that charged was with hey  
 Whiche that a carter droue forth in the wey  
 Deep was the wey for whiche the carte stode  
 This carter smote and cryde as he were wode  
 What heyt brok heyt scot spare ye for the stones  
 The feende quod he you seche body and bones  
 As ferforth as euir ye were y foled  
 So moche wo as I haue for you tholed  
 The deuyl haue al bothe horse carte and hey  
 Quod the Sompnoure here shal we haue a pley  
 And nere the feende he drewe as naught ne were  
 Ful pryuelly and rowned in his ere  
 Herkyn my brother herkyn by thy seyth  
 Heryst nat how the carter seyth  
 Take it anone for he hath geue it the  
 Bothe hey and carte and eke his capulles thre  
 Nay quod the deuyl god wote neuir a dele  
 It is nat his entent truste me wele  
 Aske him self if that you trowest nat me  
 Dr elles stynt a while and thou shalt se  
 This carter chaked his horse on the croupe  
 And they began to draue and to stoupe  
 Rayte now quod he that Jesu crist you bles  
 And alle his hondy worke bothe more and les  
 That was wele y twyght myn owne lperde boy  
 I pray god saue the and seynt loye

## The frezes Tale

Now is my carte oute of the slouth parde  
To brothez quod the fende what tolde I the  
Here may ye se myn owne dere brothez  
The chorde spake one thyng and thought a nothez  
Pet vs go forth aboute oure byage  
Here Wynne I nothyng vpon this cariatte  
Whan that they cam somwhat oute of the town  
This sompnoure to his brothez gan to roun  
Brothez quod he here wonyth an olde rebecke  
That hadde almoost as leef to lese her necke  
As for to peue a peny of her gode  
I wol haue twelue pens though that she be wode  
Or I wol somone her vnto oure office  
And pet god wote of her I knowe no byce  
But for thou canst nat as in this countre  
Wynne thy costes take here ensample of me  
This sompnoure clapyd at the wydowes gate  
Come oute he sayde thou olde berzy trate  
I trowe thou hast som preest or freze with the  
Who knockith sayde this wyf benedicite  
God saue you sir what is youre swete wyl  
I haue quod the sompnoure of the a byl  
Vpon peyne of cursyng loke that thou be  
To morow bifoze the archedebyns knee  
To aunswere to the courte of certayn thyng  
Now lorde quod she Jesu criste heuyh kyng  
So wysely helpe me as I ne may  
I haue be sche and that ful many a day  
I may nat go so fer quod she ne ryde  
But I be dede so prycketh in my syde  
May I nat aske a lybel sir Sompnoure  
And aunswere there by my proctoure  
To suche thyng as men wol appose me



## The frezes Tale

yes quod the Sompnoure pay anon let se  
Twelf pens to me and I wol the quyte  
I shal no profet haue therby But lyte  
My master hath the profet and nat I  
Come of and lete me ryde hastely  
peue me twelf pens for I may no lengere tary  
Twelf pens quod she a lady seint Mary  
So wysely me helpe oute of care and synne  
This wyde world: though I sholde it wyne  
Ne haue I nat twelue pens within my holde  
ye knowe wele that I am poure and olde  
My the poure almes on me poure wretche  
May than quod he the soule feende me feche  
If I the excuse though thou sholde be spylt  
Alas quod she god wote I am nat in the gylt  
Pay me quod he or by swete seint anne  
I wol anone bere a wey thy newe pay  
For dette whiche thou owest me of olde  
Whan that thou madest thy husbande cokc olde  
I payde at home for thy correction  
Thou lvest quod she by my saluacion  
Ne was I neuiz or now wydowe ne wyf  
Sompned vnto poure courte in alle my lyf  
Ne neuiz I was but of my body true  
Vnto the deupl blake and rough of he we  
peue I thy body and eke myn panne also  
And whan the deupl herde her curse so  
Upon her knees he sayde in this manere  
Now mayst myn owne modre dere  
Is this poure wyl in ernyst as ye sey  
The deupl quod she fette him or he dey  
And panne and al bu the wol him repent  
May olde stot that is nat myn entent

## The frezes Tale

Quod the sompnoure for to repent me  
For any thyng that I haue hadde of the  
I wolde I hadde thy smoke and euery cloth  
Now brother quod the deupl be nat wrothe  
Thy body and this panne is myn by right  
Thou shalt to helle with me yet to nyght  
Where thou shalt knowe of oure pryuite  
More than a mapster of diuinyte  
And with that worde the foule feende him hent  
Body and soule he with the deupl went  
Where that these sompnoures haue theire heritage  
And god that made after his ymage  
Manhynd. saue and gyde vs alle and some  
And leue that sompnoures gode men become  
Lordpnytes I coude telle you quod the frere  
Hadde I had leue for the sompnoure here  
After the texte of crist poule and John  
And of oure othez doctoures many one  
Suche peynes as poure hertes myght agryse  
Al be it so that no tynge may I deupse  
Though that I myght a thousand wynter tel  
The peynes of that cursyd house of helle  
But for to kepe vs fro that cursed place  
Wakith and prayeth Jesu of his grace  
So kepe vs fro the temptoure Sathanas  
Herkneth this worde be ware as in this caas  
The loun sytteth in his wayte alwey  
To sle the innocent if that he may  
Dispose ye poure hertes ay to withstonde  
The feende that wol make you thral and bonde  
He may nat tempte you ouir your myght  
For criste wol be poure champpon and knyght  
And pray the sompnoure him repent



## The Sompnours prologue

Of his mysdedys or that the deuyl him hent

Here endith the freres tale  
And begynneth the Sompnours prologe

**t** His sompnoure in his sterop high stode  
Upon this freze his hert was so wode  
That lyke an aspen leef he quoke for ire  
Lordinges quod he one thyng I desire  
I you beseeche of youre curtesye  
Sithen ye haue herde this false freze lye  
As suffreth me I may my tale tel  
This frere bostith that he knowith wel  
And god wote that is lytel wondre  
Freres and feendes been ful lytel a sondre  
For parde ye haue herde ofte tyme tel  
How that a freze raupshed was to helle  
In spiryte onys by a bysioun  
And as an aungel led him vp and down  
To shewe him the tormentes that were there  
In al the place ne saue he nat a freze  
Of othez folke he saue ynough in wo  
Unto the aungel spake this freze tho  
Now siz quod he haue frezes suche a grace  
That none of them shal come in this place  
Yes quod the aungel many a myllion  
And vnto sathanas he ledde him down  
And now hath sathanas suche a tayle  
Broder than a Carpye is the sayle  
Holde by thy tayle thou sathanas quod he  
Shewe forth thy ers and let the freze se  
Where is the nest of frezes in this place  
And or that a furlong were of space

## The sompnoures' prologue

And right so as bees swarme oute of an hyue  
Dute of the deuylls ers they gan dryue  
Twenty thousand frezes on a route  
And throughe oute helle swarmyd alle a bouthe  
And cam agayn as faste as they may gone  
And into his ers they crepte euerichone  
He clypped ageyn his tayle and lay styl  
This freze whan he loked had his fyl  
Doun the tormentes of this sorp place  
His spyrite god restored of his grace  
Dunto his body agayn and he a woke  
But natheles for fere yet he quoke  
So was the deuylls ers ay in his mynde  
Than is it his heritage of berry kynde  
God saue you al saue this cursed freze  
My prologue wol I ende in this manere

Here endith the sompnoures prologue





# The Sompnoures Tale

Here begynneth the Sompnoures tale

¶ Dydnges ther is in yorke shyre as I gesse  
A meresse countre that called is holdernesse  
In whiche ther went a lymptoure aboute  
To preche. and eke to begge it is no doute  
And so befyl that on a day this freze  
Hadde prechyd in a chirche in his manere  
And specially aboue euery thyng  
Excyted he the people in his prechyng  
To trentalles and to peue for goddes  
Wherwith men myght holy houses make  
There as dyuine seruice is honoured  
Nat there it is wastyd and deuoured  
For there it nedith nat to be peuen  
As to possessioners that may lyuen  
Thankyd be god in wele and habundaunce  
Trentales sayd he delpueyryn from penaunce  
Theire frendes soules as wele olde as yong  
ye whan they be hastely y song  
Nat for to holde a preest ioly and gay  
He syngith nat but one masse on a day  
Delpuereth oute anon quod he the soules  
ful harde it is with flesshe and oules  
To be y cawed or to brenne or bahe  
Now spede you hastely for cristes sake  
And whan this freze had sayde al his entent  
With qui cum patre forth his wey he went  
Whan folke in the chirche had peue what them lest  
He went his way no lenger wolde he rest  
With scrippe and tpypped staf y tuched hye  
In euery house he gan to poure and pryue  
And begged mele and chese or elles corn

## The Sompnoures Tale

His fela we had a staf y tpyppyd with horn  
A peyre of tables of clene puerp  
And a popntel y poliffhed fetoufly  
And wrote the names alwey as he stode  
Of al the folke that paue them any gode  
A shaunce that he wolde for them pray  
yeue vs a buffel whete malt or rey  
A goddes hyrtel or a cryppe of chese  
Or elles what you lyst I may nat chese  
A goddes half peny or a masse peny  
Or yeue vs of yow. Traune if ye haue any  
A dagon of youre blankete leue dame  
Dure sustre dere lo here I wryte youre name  
Bacon or beef or suche thyng as ye fynde  
A sturdy harlot went them ay behynde  
That was theire hors and euir he bare a sacke  
And what men paue him leyde it on his backe  
And whan he was oute at the doore anon  
He playned awey the names euerichone  
That he bifore hadde wrytte in his tables  
He seruyd them with nyfles and with fables  
May there thoulpest sompnoure quod the freze  
Pease quod oure hoost for cristes modre dere  
Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat at alle  
So thryue I quod the sompnoure so I shal  
So long he went from house to house that he  
Cam to an house there he was wont to be  
Refresshyd more than in an hundreth places  
Seke lay the gode man whos the place is  
Bedred byon a couche lowe he lay  
Deus hic quod he o thomas gode da  
Sayde this freze curtesly and soft  
Thomas quod he god yelde you ful ofte



## The Sompnoures Tale

I haue on this benche y fare ful wele  
Here haue I etyn many a mery mele  
And fro the benche he droue a wey the cat  
And leyde a doun his potent and his hat  
And eke his scrip and set him soft a doun  
His fela we was go walken in to the toun  
Forth with his knaue in to that hostery  
Where as he shope him that nyght tolye  
O dere mayster sayde this seke man  
How haue ye faren sithen Marche began  
I sa we nat you this fourtnyght ne more  
God wote quod he laboured haue I fu. soze  
And specially for thy saluacioun  
Haue I sayde many a precious orisoun  
And for oure othez frendes god them blesse  
I haue this day been at youre chirche at messe  
And sayde a sermon to my lewde wytte  
Nat after the pley n texte of holy wrytte  
For it is herde to you as I suppose  
And therfore tel I you alle the glose  
Glosyng is a ful glorious thyng certayn  
For lettre sleeth as we clerkes sayn  
There haue I taught them to be cheritable  
And spende their gode there it is resonable  
And there I sa we oure dame where is she  
yondre in the yerde I trow that she be  
Sayde this man and she wol come anon  
A mayster welcome be ye by seint John  
Sayde this wyf. how fare ye hertely  
This freze aryseth bp ful curtesly  
And her enbra sith in his azmes narowe  
And byssith her swete and chirkpyth as a sparowe  
With his lippes. dame quod he right wele

## The Sompnoures Tale

As he that is youre seruaunt euery dele  
Thanked be god that gaue you soule and lyf  
yet sawe I nat to day so fayre a wyf  
In alle the chirche so god saue me  
ye god amende the fautes sir quod she  
Alghtes welcome ye be by myfey  
Gramericy dame that haue I founde alwey  
But of youre grette goodnes by youre leue  
I wolde pray you that ye you nat greue  
I wyl with Thomas speke a lytel throwe  
These curatoures been ful negligent and slow  
To tropen tenderly a mannys conscience  
In shryfte and in prechynge is my dyligence  
And studie on petrys wordes and poules  
I walke and fyssh the cristen mennys soules  
To yelde Jesus criste his propre rent  
To sprede his wordes is alle myn entent  
Now by youre leue dere sir quod she  
Thydethe him wele for seint charite  
He is ay angry as is a pyfmyre  
Though that he haue al that he can desyre  
Though I him wrye and make him warm  
And ouir him ley myfett and myn arme  
He troneth lyke oure boze lyth in oure sty  
O thez disporte of him right none haue I  
I may nat please him in no maner caas  
O Thomas ie vous dy thomas thomas  
This makith the feende this must be amended  
He is a thyng that high god offended  
And therfore wol I speke a worde or two  
Now mayster quod the wyf or that I go  
What wyl ye dame I wyl go ther aboute  
Now dame quod he ie vous dy sauns doute



## The Sompnoures Tale

Haue I naught of a capon but the lyuez  
And of youre white brede but a shyuez  
And after that a rosted pygges hede  
But I ne wolde for me that no best were dede  
Than hadde I with you hoolly suffisaunce  
I am a man of lytel sustenaunce  
My spyrite hath his offryng in the byble  
My body is ay so redy and so pyneble  
To wake that my body is ful destroyed  
I pray you dame that ye be nat annoyed  
Though I you my counseyl frendly shewe  
By god I nolde haue tolde it but a fewe  
And sir quod she one worde or I go  
My chyld is dede within these wokes two  
Sone after that ye went oute of this town  
His deth sawe I by reuelacioun  
Sayde this freze at home in oure dor toure  
I dar wele say that within half an oure  
After his deth I sawe him bore to blys  
In my bishoun so god my soule wys  
So dyd oure Seyten and oure fermere  
That haue be true frezes this fyfty yere  
They may now god be thanked of his lone  
Maken theire Jubile and walkyn al allone  
And by I rose dnd alle oure couent eke  
With many a tere tryllynge on oure cheke  
Withouten noyse and claterynge of belles  
Te deum was oure song and nothyng elles  
Sone after to criste I had an holy oryson  
Thankynge him of my gode reuelacioun  
For sir and dame trustith me right wele  
Oure orysouns been more effectuel  
And more we se of cristes secreat thynges

Than boze people al be they hyntes  
 We lyue in pouerte and in abynnyne  
 And boze folke in riches and dispence  
 Of mete and drynke and in soule deyrte  
 We haue the wordes lust al in despyte  
 Lazar and diues lyueden ful dyuerly  
 And dyuerse guerdone hadde they therby  
 Who so wol pray must faste and be cleue  
 And fatte his soule and make his body lene  
 We fare as sayth thapostel cloth and sode  
 Suffiseth vs though they be nat ful gode  
 The clenness and the fastyng of vs frezes  
 Makith that criste exceptith oure prayers  
 So morse fourty daies and fourty nyght  
 Fastyd or that god ful of his myght  
 Spake with him in the mount synay  
 With empty wombe fastyng many a day  
 There resceyued he the lawe that was wryten  
 With goddes synger. and hely wele ye wetyn  
 In the mount Dreb or he hadde any speche  
 With high god that is oure lyues leche  
 He fastyd long and was in contemplanche  
 Aron he hadde the temple in gouernaunce  
 And eke the othe preestes euerichone  
 Into the temple whan they sholde gone  
 To praye for the people and to do seruise  
 They nolde drynke in no maner wyse  
 No drynke that myght them dronke make  
 But there in abstynence to pray and wake  
 Lest that they deyde take hede what I say  
 But they be sobre that for the people pray  
 Where that I say for it ynough suffiseth  
 Oure lord Jesu as holy wrytte deuyseth



## The Sompnours Tale

pane be en sample of fastyng and prayers  
Therefore we mendicauntes we sely frezes  
Been weddyd to pouerte and to contynence  
To charyte humblenesse and abstynence  
To persecucion for every right wysnesse  
To wepyng mysericorde and to clenness  
And therefore may ye se that oure prayers  
I speke of be mendicaunt we frezes  
Be to the high god more exceptable  
Than poures with youre feestes at youre table  
fro paradise first if I shal nat lye  
was man oute chasyd for his glotony  
And chaste was man in paradise certayne  
But herken now Thomas what I shalke sayn  
I haue no text of it as I suppose  
But I fynde a maner thyng of a glose  
That specially oure swete lord Jesus  
Spake this by frezes whan he sayde thus  
Blyssed be they that poure in spyryte been  
And so forth alle the gospel may ye seen  
Whether it be lykez to oure professioun  
Or heyes that swymme in possessioun  
fy on their pompe and their glotony  
And of their lewdnes I them deffye  
We thynke they be lyke Jomman  
fat as a whale and walke lyke a swan  
al bynolente as a bottel in the spence  
Theire prayer is of ful lytel reuerence  
whan they for soules say the psalme of dauid  
So but they sey cor meum eructauit  
who folowith cristes gospel and his fore  
But we that humble be chaste and poure  
workers of goddes wordes and nat auditoures

## The Sompnoures Tale

Therefore right as an hauke vpon his cours  
By spryngith in the ayer right so prayers  
Of cheritable and chaste besy frezes  
Makyn them fours to goddes eris two  
Thomas thomas so moot I ryde or go  
And by that lorde that clepyd was seynt Iue  
Ne thou our brother were sholdest thou nat thryue  
For in oure chapitre praye we day and nyght  
To criste to sende the bothe helth and myght  
Thy body for to welden ful hastely  
God wote quod he therof no thyng fele I  
As helpe me god as in fe we yeres  
Haue I spended on many dyuerse frezes  
Ful many a pounde yet fare I neuiz the bet  
Certayn my gode haue I almoost besette  
Fare wele my golde for it is alle agto  
The freze aunswerde o thomas dost thou so  
What nedith the dyuers frezes for to seche  
What nedith him that hath a parfyte leche  
To sechen othez leches in the toun  
youre inconstaunce is youre confusioun  
Holde ye than me and eke al oure couent  
To pray for you be nat sufficient  
Thomas that iape is nat worth a myte  
youre malady is for we haue tolyte  
A peue that couent foure and twenty grotes  
And peue that couent half a quarter otes  
And peue that freze a peny and lete him go  
Nay nay Thomas it may nothyng be so  
What is a ferthyng worth parted on twelue  
Do eche thyng that is onyd in them selue  
Is more stronge than whan it is shatred  
Thomas of me thou shalt nat be flatred



## The Sompnoures Tale

Thou woldest haue oure laboure al for nougth  
The hight god that al this worlde hath wrought  
Sayth that the workman is worthy his hire  
Thomas of poure tresoure naught wol I desire  
As for my self but that al oure couent  
To prey for you be ay so diligent  
And for to holde by cristes own churche  
Thomas if ye wol lerne for to wyche  
Of byldyng upon churches may ye fynde  
If it be gode in Thomas lye of ynde  
ye lye here ful of angre and of ire  
With whiche the deuyll set poure herte on fyre  
And chyden here this holy innocent  
poure wif that is here so meke and pacient  
And therfore thomas trowe me if thou lyst  
Ne stryue nat with thy wyf as for the best  
And bere this worde a wey now by thy sayth  
Touchyng suche thyng lo what the wyse sayth  
Within thy house ne be thou no loun  
To thy subgettes do thou noon oppressioun  
Ne make thy acquaintance nat to fe  
And thomas yet eft sones warne I the  
Be ware of her that in thy bosom slepith  
Ware fro the serpent that so slepy crepith  
Vndre the grasle and styngith ful subtelly  
Be ware my sonne and herkyn paciently  
That twenty thousand men haue lost their lyues  
For stryuyng with their lemmannys & their wyues  
Now sithen ye haue so holy a meke wyf  
What nedith you thomas to make stryf  
Ther nys I wys no serpent so cruelle  
Whan a man treddith upon his tayle ne half so fel  
As a woman is whan she hath caught an yre

## The Sompnoures tale

Verry vengeance is than al her desire  
Ire is a synne one of the grete of seyn  
And ful abhomyable to the kyng of heyn  
And to him selue it is a destruction  
This euery lewde bycar or parson  
Can say how ire engendreth homycide  
Ire in soth the executoure is of pryde  
Iroude of ire say right moche sorowe  
That my tale sholde last tyl the morowe  
And therfore pray I god bothe day and nyght  
That to an irous man god sende lytel right  
It is grete harm and certis grete pyte  
To set an irous man in high degree

W    Bilom ther was an irous potestate  
As sayth seneke. that durynghis astate  
Upon a day oute ryden knyghtes two  
And as fortune wolde that it was so  
That one of them cam home that other nought  
Anone the knyght afore the iuge is brought  
That sayde thus thou hast thy felowe slayne  
For whiche I deme the to deth certayne  
And to a nother knyght comaunded he  
Go lede him to the deth I charge the  
And happyd as they went by the wey  
Towarde the place where he sholde dey  
The knyght cam whiche men wende had be dede  
Than thought they it were the best rede  
To lede them bothe to the iuge agayn  
They sayde lord the knyght is nat slayn  
His felawe here he stont hole a lyne  
ye shal be dede quod he so moot I thryue  
This is to sey bothe on two and thre  
And to the first knyght right thus spake he



## The Sompnoures Tale

I dampned the thou must algaates be dede  
And thou also must nedes lese thy hede  
for thou art cause why thy felawe dyeth  
And to the thridde knyght right thus he seyth  
Thou hast nat do that I comaunded the  
And thus he dyd do them sle al thre

i Rus Cambyses was eke dronklew

And ay delpyted him to be a shrewe

And so besyl a lorde of his menpe

That louyd wele vertuons moralyte

Sayd on a day bitwyt hem self right thus

A lorde is lost if he be ougth vicious

There is many an eye and many an ere

Awaytynng on a lorde he wote nat where

And dronknesse is eke a foule recorde

Of any man and namely of a lorde

for goddes loue drynkith more temperatly

Wyne makith a man to lesen wrechydly

His mynde and eke his lymmes euerichone

The reuerse shalt thou se quod he anone

And preue it by thy owne experience

That wyne ne doth to folke suche offence

Ther is no wyne bereuyth me my myght

Of honde of fote ne of myn eyen sight

And for despyte he dranke moche the more

An hundreth part than he dyd bifoze

And right anone this prous cursed wreche

This knyghtes sonne leet bifoze him fetche

Comaunded him he sholde bifoze him stonde

And sodenly he toke his bowe in honde

And by the stryng he pulled to his ere

And with an arowe he slough the childe there

Now whither haue I a spker honde or none

## The Sompnoures tale

Quod he is al my myght and my mynde agone  
Hath wyne bereuyd me myn eyen sight  
What sholde I telle the aunswere of the knyght  
His sone was sleyn ther is no more to say  
Be ware therfore with lordes for to pley  
Syngeth placebo and I shalle if I can  
But if it be vnto a poure man  
To a poure man men sholde his byces telle  
But nat to a lorde though he sholde go to hel  
¶ O Irus Cprus that ilke percieu  
How distroyed he the ryuez of gysen  
For that an horse of his was dreynt therin  
Whan that he went babilon for to wyne  
He made that the ryuez was so smal  
That men myght ryde or wade ouir al  
Po what sayd he that so welc teche can  
Ne be no felawe to no an irous man  
Ne with no wode man walke by the wey  
Lest thou repente I wol no ferther sey  
Now thomas leef brother leue thyn ire  
Thou shalt me fynde as iuste as a squire  
Holde nat the deupples knyght in thyn herte  
Thyn angre doth the al to soze smert  
But shewe to me alle thy confession  
May quod the seke man by seint Symon  
I haue be shryue this day of my curate  
I haue him tolde al hooly myn estate  
It nedith nomore to speke of it sayde he  
But if it lyst of myn humylite  
peue me than of thy gode to make oure cloyster  
Sayd he for many a muskle and many an opster  
Whan othez men haue been ful wele at ease  
Haue been oure food oure cloyster for to reyse



## The Sompnoures Tale

And yet god wote bnneth oure fundament  
Parfourmed is ne of oure chirche ful pauement  
Ther is nat a tyle within oure wonys  
By god we owe fyfty ponde for stones  
Now helpe thomas for him that harowed helle  
Or elles must we oure bokes selle  
And if men lacke oure predicacioun  
Than goth the worlde al to distructioun  
For who so wol fro this worlde be bereue  
So god me saue thomas by youre leue  
He wolde bereue oute of this worlde the sonne  
For who can teche and worke as we konne  
And that is nat of lytel tyme quod he  
But sithen hely was or helyse  
Haue frezes be that fynde I of recorde  
In charite y thanked be oure lorde  
Now thomas helpe for seynt charite  
And down anone he sitteth on his knee  
This seke man weyt nygh wode for ire  
He wolde that the freze had be a fyre  
With his false dissymplacioun  
Suche thynges as been in my professioun  
Quod he that may I yeue and none othez  
ye say me thus hou that I am youre brothez  
ye certis quod the frere trustith me right wele  
I toke oure dame oure lettre and our sele  
Now wele quod he and somwhat shal I yeue  
Vnto youre holy couent while I leue  
And in thy honde thou shalt it hane anone  
On this condicion and othez none  
That thou departe it so my dere brothez  
That euery freze haue a smоче as othez  
This shalt thou swere on thy professioun

## The Sompnours tale

Withoute fraude or cauillacioun  
I swere it quod the freze vpon my feyth  
And therewith al his honde in his he leyth  
So here my feyth in me shal be no lache  
Than put thy hond adoun right by my backe  
Sayde this man and grope wele behynde  
Byneth my buttoke there shalt thou fynde  
A thyng that I haue hydde in pryuyte  
A thought this freze that shal go with me  
And doun his honde he launcheth to the clyft  
In hope for to fynde there som gode yest  
And whan this seke man felt this freze  
Aboute his towel troppynge here and there  
Amyd his honde he let the freze a farte  
Ther is no capul drawyng in a carte  
That myght haue let a farte of suche a soun  
The freze vp stert as doth a wode loun  
A fals chorle quod he for coches bones  
This hast thou in despyte do for the nonys  
Thou shalt abyge this fart if that I may  
His meny with that herde suche aray  
Come lepyng in and chased oute the freze  
And forth he goth with a ful heuy chere  
And fet his fela we there as lay his store  
He looked as he were a wyldi bore  
And grynteth with the tethe so was he wrothe  
A sturdy paas doun to the courte he goth  
Where as there woned a man of grete honoure  
To whome that he was alwey confessoure  
This worthy man was lorde of that byllage  
This freze cam as he were in a rage  
Where as this lorde sat etyng at the borde  
Vnneth myght the freze speke one worde



## The Sompnoures Tale

Tyl at the last he sayde god you se  
This lord gan loke and sayd benedicite  
What freze John what maner worlde is this  
I se wele some thyng ther is a mys  
ye loke as though the wode were ful of theuys  
Syt down and tel me what youre greue is  
And it shal be amended if that I may  
I haue quod he had a despyte to day  
God yelde it you a down in youre byllatte  
That in this worlde ther nys so poure apatte  
That he nolde haue abhomyngnacioun  
Of that I haue resceyued in the toun  
And yet ne greuyth me nothyng so soze  
As that the olde chorle with lockis hore  
Blasphemyd hath oure holy couent eke  
Now mayster quod the lord I you beseke  
No mayster sir quod he but seruytoure  
Though I haue had in scole that honoure  
God lyketh nat that raby men vs calle  
Nothet in market ne in othet large halle  
No force quod he but tel me al youre greef  
Sir quod this freze an odious myschief  
This day betydde is to myn ordre and me  
And so per consequens in eche degre  
Of holy chirche god amend it sone  
Sir quod the lord we wote what is to done  
Distempere you nat ye be my confessor  
ye be the salt of the erthe and the sauoure  
For goddes loue your patience now holde  
Tel me youre greef. and he anone him tolde  
As ye haue herde bifore ye wote wele what  
The lady of the house ay styll sat  
Tyl she had herde what the freze had sayde

The Sompnoures tale

By goddes modre quod she this blissid mayde  
Is ther ought elles tel me feythfully  
Madame quod he hou thynke ye therby  
How that me thynketh quod she so god me spede  
I say a chorle hath do a chorles dede  
What sholde I say god let him neuiz the  
His seke hede is fulle of banpte  
I holde him in a maner of a fransye  
Madame quod he by god I shal nat lye  
But I in any wyse may on him a wreke  
I shal diffame him ouir alle where I speke  
That fals blasphemoure whiche that charged me  
To parte it that wol nat departed be  
To euery y lyke moche with myschaunce  
The lord sat styll as he were in a traunce  
And in his herte he rollyd bp and down  
How that this chorle hath ymagynacioun  
To shewe suche a probleme to the freze  
Neuiz erst or now herde I of suche a matere  
I trowe the deupl put it in his mynde  
In arismetrike shal ther no man fynde  
Bifore this day of suche a questioun  
Who sholde make a demonstracioun  
That euery man shorde haue lyke his parte  
As of a soun or of sauoure of a farte  
O nyce proude chorle I shrewe his face  
Po sires quod the lord with harde grace  
Who euiz herde of suche a thyng or now  
To euery man y lyke tel me how  
This is an impossible it may nat be  
By nyce chorle godlet him neuiz the  
The romblyng of a farte and euery scun  
Nys but of the apez reuerberacioun



## The Sompnoures tale

And euir it wastyth lyte and lyte a wey  
Ther is noman can deme by my fey  
If that it were departed equally  
What lo my chorle lo yet how shrewdly  
Vnto my confessoure to day he spake  
I holde him certayn a demonyache  
Now ete youre mete and let the chorle go pley  
Let him go hang him self a deuyll wey  
Now stode the lordes squyer at his borde  
That carued his mete and herde worde by worde  
Of alle this thyng of whiche I haue you sayde  
My lord quod he be ye nat euyl appayed  
For I coude telle for a golwe clothe  
To you sir freze so ye be nat brothe  
How that this fart sholde eyn delyd be  
Among your couent if it lyke sy thee  
Tel quod the lord and thou shalt haue anone  
A golwe clothe by god and by seint John  
My lord quod he whan that the wedyr is fayre  
Withoute wynde oz perturbyng of aye  
Let bryng a carte whele right into this halle  
But so that it haue the spokes al  
Twelf spokes hath a carte whele comonly  
And bryng me than twelue frezes woot ye why  
For thertene is a couent as I gesse  
Your confessoure here for his worthynesse  
Shal parfouze me by the nombre of his couent  
Than shal they knele down by one assent  
And to euery spokes ende in this manere  
Ful sadly lay his nose shal a freze  
Your noble confessour ther god him saue  
Shal holde his nose vpright vndre the naue  
Than shal this chorle with bely styf and tought

## The Sompnours tale

As any taboure hyder be y brought  
And set him on the whele right of this carte  
Vpon the naue and make him let a farte  
And ye shal se vpon peryl of my lyf  
By preef whiche that is demonstratyf  
That equally the sounde if it wol wende  
And eke the st ynke oute of the spokes ende  
Saue that this worthy man your confessor  
Bicause he is a man of grete honoure  
Shal haue the first fruyte as reason is  
The noble vsage of frezes yet is this  
The worthpest man of them shal first be seruyd  
And certaynly he hath it wele deseruyd  
He hath to day taught vs so moche gode  
With prechynge in the pulpet there he stode  
That I may vouchesauf I say for me  
He hadde the first smelle of fartes thre  
And so wolde al his brethern hardely  
He berith him so fayre and so holyly  
The lord the lady and eke man saue the freze  
Sayd that Jankyn spake in this matere  
As wele as Dyd or protholome  
Touchyng the chorles they sayd subtelte  
And higg wyf made him speke as he spake  
He nys no fool ne no demonyake  
And Jankyn hath y wonne a newe gown  
My tale is doon we be almost at the tonn

Here endith the Sompnours tale  
And here foloweth the prologue of the  
Clerke of Oxenforde



## The Clerkes prologue of Dvenforde

¶ prclerke of Dvenforde oure hoost sayde  
ye ryde as quoy and styl as doth a mayde  
were new spoused sy ttryng at the borde  
This day ne herde I of poure tong a worde  
I trow ye stude aboute som sophyme  
Bnt Salamon sayde that al thyng hath tyme  
for goddis sake as be of gode chere  
It is no tyme now to stude here  
Tel vs some mery tale by poure fep  
for what man is entred in to a pley  
He nedes mozt in to the pley assent  
But prechith nit as frezes do in sent  
To make vs forure olde spures wepe  
Ne that thy tale mke vs nat to slepe  
Tel vs som mery thyng of auctures  
poure termes poure coloures and poure figures  
Wepe them in store til so be that ye endyte  
Rygh style as when ren to hpyng Wryte  
Spekith so playn a this tyme I pou pray  
That we may vnderstonde what ye say  
This worthy clerke benygneley answeerd  
O st quod he I am yczre yerde  
ye haue as now of vs the gouernaunce  
And therfore I shal io you obey saunce  
As fer as reason a slith hardely  
I wol you tel a tale whiche that I  
Peruyd at padowe of a worthy clerke  
As preuyd is by his wordes and his werke  
He is now dede and nayled in the cheste  
I pray to god geue his soule gode rest  
Fraunceys pitrarke the laureat poete  
Ryght this clerke whose rethorpye swete  
Enlumpned al ytaile of poetrye

## The Clerkes prologe of Wyenforde

As lynnan dyd of philosophye  
Or la we or othez arte particulere  
But deth that wol nat suffre vs duelle here  
But as it were the tynkley n of an eye  
Them bothe hath slayne al shal we dye  
But forth to tel of this worthy man  
That taught me this tale as I began  
I say that first with high style he enditeth  
Or he the body of his tale writeth  
A prohempe in whiche discripueth he  
Pe mounte and of saluces the countre  
And spekieth of apertyn the hilles hye  
That been the boundes of Wylt lumbardye  
And of mount beselus in specialle  
Where that the po oute of the wel smalle  
Takynge his first spryngynge and his furs  
That est ward euiz encre fith in his cour  
To comely warde to fere and benyse  
The whiche a long thyng were to deup  
And truly as to my iudgement  
Me thynkith it a long apertynent  
Saue that himlyst conueye his matere  
But this is his tale as ye may here

Here endith the prologue of the  
Clerke of Wyenforde  
And here begynneth his tale



# The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde



t Here is in the West syde of Itayle  
Down at the rute of besulus the colde  
A lusty playn habundannt of bytaye  
Where many a town and toure thou mayst behold  
That founded were in tyme of faders olde  
And many a nother delptable sight  
And saluces this noble countre hight

A Markes somtyme lord was of that londe  
As were his worthy eldres him bifoze  
And obeysaunt ay redy to his honde  
Were alle his lieges bothe lasse and more  
Thus in delpte he lyued and hath doo pore  
Beloued and dradde througħ fauoure of fortune  
Bothe of his lordes and eke of his comune

Therwith he was to speke of lynage  
The gentyllest y born of lumbarde  
A fayre parson a strong and yong of age  
And ful of honoure and of curtesye

Discrete ynough his countre for to gy  
Saue in som thynges that he was to blame  
And Walter was this yong lordes name

I blame him thus that he considered nat  
In tyme comyng what myght him betyde  
But on his lust present was al his thought  
As for to hauke and hunte on euery syde  
Wele nygh alle othez cures lete he slyde  
And eke he nolde and that was worst of al  
Wedde no wyf for ought that myght befall

Only that poynte his people bare so sore  
That flocke meke on a day they to him went  
And one of them that wysest was of lore  
Mekes that the lord wolde best assent  
That he sholde tel him what his people ment  
Mekes coude he shewe wele suche matere  
He to the marques sayd as ye shal here

A noble marques your humanyte  
Assureth vs and proueth vs hardynesse  
As ofte as tyme is of necessity  
That we to you may telle oure heynnesse  
Acceptith now lord of your gentylnes  
That we with pytous hert vnto you pleyne  
And let you erys nat my voyce disdeyne

Al haue I nat to done in this matere  
More than a nother man hath in this place  
yet for a smoch as ye my lord so dere  
Haue alwey shewed me fauour and grace  
I dar the better aske of you a space  
Of audience to shewe oure request  
And ye my lord to do right as you lest

For certis lord so wele bespetheth you  
And al youre werke and euir haue doon that we



## The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Ne coude nat oure self deuysse how  
We myght lye in more felicitye  
Saue one thyng lord if youre wyf be  
That for to be a weddyd man you lest  
Than were youre people in souerayne hertes rest  
Bowe ye youre hede vnder the blissful yoke  
Of soueraynte and nat of seruyse  
Whiche that men clepith spousayle or wedloke  
And thynkith lord among youre wyttes wyse  
How that oure daies passe in sondry wyse  
For though we slepe or wake ryne or ryde  
As flyeth the tyme it wol noman abyde  
And though youre grene yowthe floure as yet  
Increpith age as styll as any stone  
And deth man asseth euery age and smyte  
In eche estate for there eschapith none  
And also certayn as we knowe echone  
That we shal dye and vncertayn we alle  
Been of the day whan deth shal on vs falle  
Acceptith than of vs the true entent  
That yet neuir refuseden youre heste  
And we wol lord if ye wol assent  
These you a wyf in short tyme at the lest  
Born of the gentyllest and of the mest  
Of al ytalie so that it ought seme  
Honoure to god and you as I can deme  
Delyuer vs oute of alle this besy drede  
And take a wyf for high goddes sake  
For if so be it be falle as god forbide  
That throughe youre deth youre lyne sholde slake  
And that a straunge successoure sholde take  
Your heritage o wo were vs on lyue  
Wherfore we pray you hastely to wyue

## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

**E** Her meke prayez and her pytous chere  
Made the marques herte for to haue pyte  
Ye wol quod he myn owne people dere  
To that I neuir erst thought constreyne me  
I me reiofed of my lyberte  
That selden tyme is founde in mariatte  
There I was fre I must be in seruagge  
But nathelesse I se youre true entent  
And truste vpon youre wytte and haue done ay  
Wherfore of my fre wyf I wol assent  
To wedde me as sone as euir I may  
But theze as ye haue profered me to day  
To chese me a wyf I you relete  
That chose I pray you of that profer sece  
For god it wote that children oft been  
Unlyke theire worthy elders them bifoze  
Bounte cometh al of god nat of the streyn  
Of whiche they be gendred and y bore  
I truste in goddes bounte and therfore  
My mariatte and myn astate and rest  
I him betake he may do as him lyst  
Lete me allone in chesynge of my wyf  
That charge vpon my bake I wyl endure  
But I you pray and charge vpon your lyf  
That what wyf I take ye may assure  
To worshippe her whyles her lyf may dure  
In worde in werke both here and euery where  
As she an emperours doughter were  
And ferthermore this shal ye swere that ye  
Arenst my chose shal neuir grutche ne stryue  
For sithen I shal forgo my lyberte  
At youre request as euir moot I thryue  
There as my herte is sette there wol I wyue



## The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

And but ye wol assent in suche manere  
I pray you spekeith nomore of this matere  
With herty wyl they sweryn and assentyn  
To alle this thyng there sayd nat one wight nay  
Besekyng him of grace or that that they wentyn  
That he wolde graunte them a certayn day  
Of his spousaile as sone as euer he may  
For yet alwey many of the people dredde  
Lest the marques wolde no wyf wedde

He graunted them a day suche as them lest  
On whiche he wolde be weddyd siherly  
And sayde he dyd al this at theire request  
And they with humble entent buyomly  
Knelynge vpon theire knees ful reuerently  
Him thanked alle and thus they haue an ende  
Of theire entent and home agayn they wende

And herupon he toke his officers  
And comaunded for the fest for to puruey  
And to his pryuy knyghtes and squyers  
Suche charge paue as he lyst on them ley  
And they to his comaundment obeye  
And eche of them doth al his diligence  
To do vnto that fest high reuerence

### Prima pars Grisilidis

n At fez fro that paleys honourable  
There as this marques shope his mariage  
There stode a thorpe of sight ful delytable  
In whiche that poure folke of that byllage  
Hadde theire bestes and theire herbygge  
And of theire laboure toke theire sustenaunce  
After that the erthe paue them habundaunce

## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

Among these poure folke ther duelled a man  
Whiche was y holde pourest of them alle  
But high god somtyme sende can  
His grace into a pytel oyes stalle  
Janyncola men of that throwpe him cal  
A doughter hadde he fayre ynough to sight  
And Brisilides this yong mayden sight  
But for to speke of vertuons beaute  
Than was she one the fayrest vndre sonne  
And ful pouverly y fostryd by was she  
No lycorous lust was through her herte y ronne  
But ofter of the welle than of the wyne tonne  
She dranke and she wolde vertue please  
She knewe wele laboure but none ydle ease

But though this mayde so tendre were of age  
yet in the brest of her virginyte  
There was enclosed ryte and sadde corage  
And in grete reuerence of charite  
Her old poure fadre fostryd she  
A fewe shepe spynnynge on feide she kepte  
She wolde nat be ydle tyl she slepte

And whan she homwarde cam she wolde brynge  
wortys or othe herbes tymes ofte  
The whiche she shredde and sethith for her lyuynge  
And made her bedde harde and nothyng soft  
And ay she kept her faders lyf on lof  
With euerichone obeysaunce and diligence  
That childe myght do to the faders reuerence

Vpon Brisilde this poure creature  
ful oft sithys this marques set his eye  
As he rode on huntynge parauenture  
And whan it besyl that he myght her aspye  
He nat with wanton lokynge of folp



His eyen cast on her but in sad' wyse  
Upon her cheke he wolde him oft auyse  
Commendynge in his hert her womanhode  
And eke her vertue passynge any wight  
Of so yong atte as wele in chere as dede  
For though the people had no grete insight  
In vertue he considred ful right  
Her bounte and disposed him that he wolde  
Wedde her only if he euir wedde sholde

The day of weddyng cam but no wight can  
Tel what maner woman it sholde be  
For whiche meruayle wondred many a man  
And sayd they were in pryuyte  
Wol nat oure lordelene yet his banyte  
Wol he nat wedde allas allas the while  
Why wol he thus him selue and vs begyle

But natheles this marques had do make  
Of gemmys set in golde and in a sure  
Broches and rynges for Crisilides sake  
And of her clothyng toke the mesure  
Of a mayde lyke vnto her stature  
And eke of her othez orna mentes alle  
That vnto suche a weddyng sholde be falle

The tyme of vndryng on the same day  
Approchyd that the weddyng sholde be  
And al the paleys put was in aray  
Bothe halle and chambre eche in his degre  
Houses of office stuffed with grete plente  
There mayst thou se of deyn teous bytyle  
That may be fonnde as fer as lastith ytale

This ryalle marques richely arrayed  
Lordes and ladies in his company

## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

The whiche that to the fest were prayed  
And of his retenu the bachelery  
With many a sowne of sondry melody  
Vnto the byllage of whiche I tolde  
In this aray the right wey haue holde

Grisilde of this god wote ful innocent  
That for her shapen was al this aray  
To fet water at a wellle is went  
And cometh home as sone as euir she may  
For wele she herde sayd that ilke day  
That the marques sholde wedde and if she myght  
She wolde fayne haue seyn som of that sight

She thought I wol with othez maydeyns stond  
That been my felawes in oure dore and se  
The marques and therfore wyl I fonde  
To doon at home as sone as it may be  
The labour whiche that longith to me  
And than I may at leysur here beholde  
If she this wey vnto the castel holde

And as she wolde ouir the threshholde gone  
The marques cam and gan her for to calle  
And she sat down her water pot anone  
Beside the thre sholde in an oyes stalle  
And down vpon her knees she gan to fal  
And with sadde countenaunce kneled styl  
Tyl she had herde her soueraynes lordes wyl

This thoughtful markes spake vnto the mayde  
Ful sobirly and sayd in this manere  
Where is youre fadre o Grisildes he sayde  
And she with reuerence and humble chere  
Aunswerde lorde he is al redy here  
And in she goth withouten lenger let  
And to the marques she her fadre fet



He by the honde than toke this olde man  
 And sayd thus whan he hadde him a syde  
 Janpcula I nether may ne can  
 The plesaunce lenger of my herte hyde  
 If that thou vouchesauf that so betyde  
 Thy doughter wol I take or that I wende  
 As to my wyf bnto her lyues ende

Thou louest me I wote it wele certayn  
 And art my feythful liege man boze  
 And al that lytheth me I dar wele sayn  
 It lytheth the and specially therfore  
 Tel me that poynte that I sayde bifoze  
 And if thou wylt bnto that purpos draue  
 To take me for thy sonne in laue

This sodeyn caas this man astoned so  
 That rede he weyt abasshyd and al quakyng  
 He stode. Bnnethe sayd he wordes mo  
 But only thus lord quod he my wyllyng  
 Is as pour wyl ne agaynst pour lykyng  
 I wol no thyng ye be my lorde soder  
 Right as you lyst gouerneth this matere

yet wol I quod this markes softly  
 That in pour chambre I and you and she  
 Haue a collacion and wotest thou why  
 For I wol aske if it her wyl be  
 To be my wyf and reule her after me  
 And al this shal be do in thy presence  
 I nyl nat speke oute of thy audience

And in the chambre while they were aboute  
 Her tretees whiche as ye shal after here  
 The people cam into the house al withoute  
 And wondred them in hou honest manere  
 And so tentesly kept her fader dere

But btterly grisilde wondre myght  
 For neuir erst ne sa we she suche a sight  
 No wondre is though she were stoned  
 To se so grette a gest come in that place  
 She neuir was to no suche gestes y woned  
 For whiche she loked with ful pale face  
 But shortly forth this matere for to chace  
 These been the wordes that the markes sayd  
 To this berzy benyngne feythful mayde

Grisilde he sayde ye shal wele vnderstand  
 It lyketh vnto youre fadre and vnto me  
 That I you wedde and eke it may so stonde  
 As I suppose ye wyl that it so be  
 But thies demaundes aske I ferst quod he  
 That sithen it shalbe done in hasty wyse  
 Wol ye assent or elles you auyse

I say thus be ye redy with gode herte  
 To al my lust and that I frely may  
 As me best thynkith though ye laugh or smert  
 And neuir ye to gruche nyght ne day  
 Whan I say ye that ye say nat onys nay  
 Nothet by worde ne by frounyng countenaunce  
 Swere this and here I swere oure alliaunce  
 Wondryng vpon these wordes quakyng for drede  
 She sayd lord indigne and vnworthy  
 I am to suche honoure as ye me bede  
 But as ye wol your self right so wol I  
 And here I swere that neuir wyllyngly  
 In werke ne thought I wol you disobey  
 For to be dede though me were loth to dye

This is ynough grisilde myn quod he  
 And forth he goth with a ful sobre chere  
 Dute at the doze and after cam she



## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

And to the people he sayde in this manere  
This is my wyf quod he that stondith here  
Honoureth her and loueth her I you pray  
Who so me loueth ther is no more to say  
And for that nothyng of her olde here  
She sholde bryng into his house he badde  
That women sholde dispoyle her there  
Of whiche these ladies were nat ful gladde  
To handel her clothes where in she was cladde  
But natheles this mayde bright of hew  
Fro foote to hede they clothed her alle new

Her heris they hempte that lay vntressyd  
Ful rudely and with theire fynghers smale  
A crowne on her hede they haue ydressed  
And set her ful of ouches grete and smale  
Of her aray what shulde I make a tale  
Vnneth the people her knewe for her fayrnesse  
Whan she translatyd was in suche riches

This markes hath her spoused with a ryng  
Brought for the same cause and than her set  
Vpon an horse snowe white ful wele amblyng  
And to his paleys or he lenger let  
With ioyfulle people that her ledde and mette  
Conueyed her and thus the day they spende  
In reuel tyl the sonne gan discede

And shortly forth this tale for to chace  
I say that to this newe marheesse  
God hath suche fauoure sent of his grace  
That it ne sempd by no lyhelenes  
That she was born and fed in rudenesse  
As in a cote or in an oyes stalle  
But norissed in an emperours halle  
To euery wight she woyen is sodere

## The Clerkes tale of Dpenforde

And worſhipful that folke there ſhe was boze  
And from her birthe knewe her yere by yere  
Wherewith trowed they but durſt haue ſwoze  
That to Janicula of whiche I ſpake biſore  
She doughter was for as by coniecture  
Them thought ſhe was a nother creature  
For though that euir vertuouſ was ſhe  
She was encreſed in ſuche excellence  
Of thewes gode ſet in high bounte  
And ſo diſcrete and faire of eloquence  
So benygne and ſo digne of reuerence  
And coude ſo the peoples hertes embrace  
That eche her loued that loked in her face  
Nat only of ſaluces in the toun  
Publiſſhed was the bounte of her name  
But eke beſyde in many a region  
If one ſayde wele another ſayde the ſame  
So ſpredded of her bounte the ſame  
That men and women bothe yong and olde  
Goon to ſaluces vpon her to beholde  
This Walter lowly nay but ryally  
Wedded hath with fortunat honeſte  
In goddes peaslyueth ful honeſtly  
At home and out ward grace ynough hadde he  
And for he ſawe that vnder lowe degre  
Was honeſt vertue hyd the people him helde  
A prudent man and that is ſeen ful ſelde  
Nat only griſilde though her wyf  
Coude al the feet of wyfly humblenes  
But eke whan that the caas requyred it  
The comune proufet coude ſhe redreſſe  
There nas diſcorde rancor ne heynnes  
In al the londe that ſhe coude it apeas



## The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

And wysely bryng them in rest and eas

Though her husbonde were absent or none  
If gentylmen or other of that countre  
were broth she wolde bryng them at one  
So wyse and ryte wordes had she  
And in iugement so grette equyte  
That she from heuyn sent was as men wende  
People to saue and euery wrong to amende

Nat long tyme after that this grisilde  
was weded she a doughter had y bore  
Al had her kyuer bore a knaue childe  
Blade was the marques and the folke therfore  
For though a mayde childe cam al bifoze  
She may bnto a knaue childe atteyne  
By lykelyhode sithen she nys nat barreyne

Explicit pars secunda

Et sequitur pars tercia

t Her fyl as it fallith ofte tyme mo  
Whan that this childe had soked but a throwe  
This markes in his herte longith so  
To tempte his wif her sadnes to knowe  
That he ne myght oute of his hert throwe  
This meruaylous desize his wif to assay  
Nedeles god wote he thought her to affrey  
He hadde assayed her ynough of tyme bifoze  
And fonde her euir good what nedith it  
Her for to tempte and alwey more and more  
Though som man pryse it for a subtel wyt  
But as for me I say ful euyl it syt  
To assay a wyf whan it is no nede  
And put her in aunguysshe and in drede

For whiche this markes wrought in this maner  
 He cam allone a nyght there as she lay  
 With sterne face and right blyt chere  
 And sayde thus grisilde quod he that day  
 That I you toke fro poure arzaie  
 And put you in estate of high noblesse  
 ye haue nat that forgotten as I gesse

I say grisilde the present dignyte  
 In whiche I haue put you as I trowe  
 Makith you nat forgetful for to be  
 That I you toke in poure estate ful lowe  
 For any wele ye must your selue knowe  
 Take hede of euery worde what I say  
 There is no wight that herith but we tway

ye wote your self hou that ye cam here  
 In to this house it is nat long a go  
 And though to me ye be both leef and dere  
 Vnto my gentylles be no thyng so  
 They say to them it is grete shame and wo  
 For to be subgette and be in seruage  
 To the that born art in so smalle a billage

And namely sithen thy doughter was y bore  
 These wordes haue they spoken doutles  
 But I desire as I haue doon bifore  
 To lyue my lyf with them in rest and peas  
 I may nat in this caas be recheles  
 I must do with thy doughter for the best  
 Nat as I wolde but as my people lyst

And yet god wote this is ful lothe to me  
 But natheles withoute your wyttynng  
 I wol nat do but this I wol quod he  
 That ye to me assente as to this thyng  
 Shewe now poure pacience in your workynng



## The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

That ye me hight and swore in yone byllage  
That day that made was oure mariatge  
Whan she hadde herde al this she nat ameuyd  
Nether in worde in chere ne in countenaunce  
For as it semed she was nat attgreuyd  
She sayth lorde al lyth in your pleasaunce  
My childe and I with hartely obeysaunce  
Been your owne and ye may saue and spylle  
your owne thyng do ye after your wyl

Ther may be nothyng so god my soule saue  
Lychyng to you that may displease me  
Ne I desire no thyng in any wise to haue  
Ne drede for to lese saue only ye  
This wyl is in myn herte and ay shal be  
Nolength of tyme or deth may this deface  
Ne turne my corage to none other place

Glade was this marques of her aunswerpynge  
But yet it semyd as it were nat so  
Al drepy was his chere and his lokyng  
Whan that he sholde oute of the chambre go  
Sone after this a furlong wey or two  
He pryuely hath tolde al his entent  
Unto a man and to his wyf him sent

A maner of a seriaunt was this preuy man  
The whiche that feythfulle he founde had  
In thynges grete and eke suche folke wel can  
Done excusacioun in thynges badde  
The lorde knewe wele that he him loued and drad  
And whan this seriaunt knewe his lordes wyl  
In to the chambre stalked him ful styl

Madame he sayde ye must forgeue it me  
Though I do thyng whiche I am constreyned  
ye be ful wyse and ful wele knowe ye

## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

That lordes heests may nat be feyned  
Though I do thyng whiche I am constreyned  
But men must nede vnto theire lust obeye  
And so wol I ther is no more to sey

This childe I am comaunded for to take  
And spake nomore but oute the childe he hent  
Dispitously and gan a chere to make  
As though he wolde haue slayn it or he went  
Grisilde must alle suffre and concent  
And as a lambe she sytteth meke and styll  
And lete this crnel seriaunt do his wyl

Suspicious was the fame of this man  
Suspecte his face suspecte his worde also  
Suspecte the tyme in whiche he this began  
Alas her doughter that she loued so  
She wende he wolde haue slayn it tho  
But neuirtheles she nether wept ne sighed  
Confermyd her to that the marques lyked

But at the last speke than she began  
And mekely she to the seriaunt prayde  
So as he was a berry gentylman  
That she myght her childe kysse onys or he dyed  
And in her barme she the lytel childe leyde  
With ful sadde face and gan the childe to blyss  
And lulled it and after gan it kysse

And thus she sayde in her benygne voyce  
Fare wele my childe I shal the neuir se  
But sithen I haue the markyd with the croyce  
Of thy lke fadre blissed moot thou be  
That for vs dyed vpon the croce of tre  
Thy soule lytel childe I him betake  
For this nyght shalt thou dye for my sake  
I trow that to a noyce in this caas



## The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

It had be herde this routhe for to se  
Wele myght a modre than haue cryed alas  
But natheles so sadde and stedefast was she  
That she endured al aduersite  
And to the seriaunt mekely she sayde  
Haue here agayn poure lytel yong mayde

Both now quod she and do my lordes heest  
But one thyng wyl I pray you of poure grace  
But if my lorde forbade you at the leest  
Burieth this lytel body in som place  
That beestes ne foules it to rase  
But he to that purpos no worde wolde say  
But toke the childe and went spon his wey

This seriaunt cam to the lorde agayn  
And of Crisylides wordes and hez there  
He tolde him poynte by poynte short and playn  
And him presented with his doughter dere  
Sum what this lorde had rewtte in his manere  
But natheles his purpos held he styll  
As lordes doon whan they wol haue theire wyl

And bad his seriaunt that he pryuyly  
Shulde the childe soft wynde and wrappe  
With alle the circumstaunces tenderly  
And cary it in a coffre oz in a lappe  
But on peyne his hede of for to swappe  
That noman sholde know of this entent  
Ne whens he cam ne whether that he went

But at Boleyn he to his sustre dere  
That ilke tyme of paup was countesse  
He sholde it take and she we hez this matere  
Bisecchyng hez to do her besynesse  
This childe to fostre in alle gentylnesse  
And whose childe that it is he bad her hyde

## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

From euery Wight for ought that may betyde

The seriaunt goth and hath fulfilled this thing

But to this markes now retourne we

For now goth he ful fast ymagynyng

If by his Wyues chere he myght se

Or by her worde perceyue that she

Were chaunged but neuir coude he fynde

But euir in one lyke sadde and kynde

As gladd as humble as besy in seruice

And eke in loue as she was wont to be

Was she to him and in euery maner wyse

Ne of her doughter nat one worde spake she

Non accident for none aduersite

Was seyn in her ne neuir her doughter name

Ne named she in earnest ne in game

*Explicit tercia pars*

*Et incipit pars quarta*

i     In this estate ther past by foure yere

Or she with childe was but as god wolde

A man chylde she bare by this waltere

Ful gracious and fayre for to beholde

And whan that folke it to his fadre tolde

Nat only he but alle his countre mery

Was for this chylde and god they thanke and hery

Whan it was two yere olde and fro the brest

Departyd fro his nozycce vpon a day

This marques caught yet a nother lyst

To tempte his wyf yet ofter if he may

Vnnedeles was she temptyd in assay

But weddyd men ne can no mesure

Whan that they fynde a pacient creature



## The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Wyf quod this marques ye haue herde or this  
My people berith heuy sikerly oure mariage  
And namely sithen my sonne y born is  
Now it is worse than euir in al oure age  
The murmure sleth my hert and my corage  
For to myn erys cometh the voyce so smert  
That it ful nyght distroyed hath myn herte

Now say they thus Whan Walter is agone  
Than shal the blode of Janynula succede  
And be oure lorde for othez haue we none  
Suche wordes sayth my people oute of drede  
Wele ought I of suche murmure take hede  
For certaynly I drede al suche sentence  
Though they nat preyen in myn audiance

I wolde lyue in pease if that I myght  
Wherfore I am disposed ful btterly  
As I his sustre sezuyd by nyght  
Right so I thynke to serue him pryncely  
This warne I you that ye nat sodenly  
Dute of your self for no wo sholde outray  
Be pacient and therof I you pray

I haue quod she sayd thus and euir shal  
I wol nothyng in no maner certayn  
But as you lyst nothyng greuyth me at al  
Though that my doughter and my sonne be slayn  
At your comaundment this is for to sayn  
I haue hadde no parte of children twayn  
But first seeknes and after wo and peyn

ye been oure lorde doth with your owne thyng  
Right as you lyst a skith no rede of me  
For as I left at home al my clothyng  
Whan I cam first to you right so quod she  
Left I my wyl and alle my liberte

## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

And toke youre clothyng wherfore I you pray  
Doth youre plesaunce I wol youre lust obey

And certis if I hadde any prescience  
Your wyl to knowe or ye youre lust me tolde  
I wolde it do withouten negligence  
But now I wote your lust and what ye wolde  
Al your plesaunce ferm and stable I holde  
For wylt I that my deth myght do you ease  
Right gladly wolde I dye you to please

Deth may nat make no comparison  
Unto your loue. and whan this markes say  
The constaunce of his wyf he cast a doun  
His eyen two and wondred that she may  
In pacience suffre al this maner aray  
And forth he goth with dreery countenance  
But to his herte it was ful grete plesaunce

This byle seriaunt in the same wyse  
That her doughter caught right so he  
Or worse if men can worse deuyse  
Hath hent her sonne that ful is of beaute  
And euir in one so pacient was she  
That she no chere made of heuyenes  
But kyst her sonne and after gan him bles

Saue she prayed him if that he myght  
Her lytel sonne he wolde in the erthe graue  
His tendre lymmes delycate in sighte  
Fro foules and fro bestes it to saue  
But she none otheer aunswere of him myght haue  
He went his wey as he nothyng ne rough  
But to boloyne he it tenderly brought

This marques wondred euir lengre the more  
Upon her pacience and if that he  
Ne hadde knowe sothly ther bifoze



That parfytely her children loued she  
 He wolde haue wende that of som subtelte  
 And of malice and for cruelle corage  
 That she had susteynd this with sadde corage

But wele he knewe that next him self certayn  
 She loued her childe best in any wyse  
 But now of women wolde I aske ful fayne  
 If these assayes myght nat suffise  
 What coude a sturdy husbonde more deuyse  
 To preue her wyfhode or her stedefastnesse  
 And he contynuyng euir in sturdynesse

But ther be folke of suche condicion  
 That whan they haue a certayn purpos take  
 That can nat stynt of theire entencioun  
 They wyl nat of theire first purpos slake  
 But right as they were bounde at a stake  
 Right so this marques hath fully purposed  
 To tempte his wif as he was first disposed

He wayted if by worde or countenaunce  
 That she to him was chaunged of corage  
 But neuir coude he fynde any variaunce  
 She was ay in one herte and in visage  
 And ay the ferther that she was in age  
 The more trewe if it were possible  
 She was to him in loue and more penyble

For whiche it semyd thus that of them two  
 There was but one wyl for but as walter lest  
 The same lust was her plesaunce also  
 And god bethanked al fyl for the best  
 She shewyd wele for none worldly vnrest  
 A wif as of her selue no thyng ne sholde  
 Wyl in effecte but as her husbonde wolde

The sclaundre of walter wondre wyde spradde

## The Clerkes tale of Dopenforde

That of cruel herte he ful wychedly  
For he a poure woman weddyd hadde  
Hath murdered bothe his children pryuely  
Suche murmure was among them comonly  
No wondre is for to the peoples ere  
Ther cam no worde but that they murdered were  
For whiche there as the people there bifoze  
Had loued him wele the sclandre of his defame  
Made them that him they hated therfore  
To be a murder is an hateful name  
But natheles for earnest ne for game  
He of his cruel purpos wolde nat stynt  
To tempte his wif was alle his entent  
Whan that his doughter twelue yere was of age  
He into the courte of Rome in subtel wyse  
Enfourmed of his wyl sent his messagge  
Comaundyng them suche bulles to deuyse  
As to his cruel purpos may suffise  
How that the pope had as for his peoples rest  
That he shulde wedde another wif if he lyst  
I say he had they shulde countrefete  
The popes bulles makynng mencion  
That he hath leue his first wif for to lete  
As by the popes owne dispensacioun  
To stynt the rancor and the discencion  
Betwene his people and him thus sayd the bulle  
The whiche they haue publisshed at the fulle  
The rude people as no wondre ne is  
Wende ful wele that it had be right so  
But whan these tydynnges cam to grisilidis  
I deme that the herte of her was ful wo  
But she ylyke sad was euirmoo  
Disposed was this humble creature



The aduersite of fortune al to endure  
 Abydyng euir his lust and his plesaunce  
 To whom that she was yeuē herte and al  
 As to his berȝ worldly suffisaunce  
 But shortly if I this story tel ſhal  
 This marques writen hath in eſpecial  
 A lētre in whiche he ſhe with his entent  
 And ſecretly to Boleyne hath it ſent

To the erle of paup whiche had tho  
 Weddyd his ſuſtre prayed him ſpecially  
 To bryng home aȝen his children two  
 In honourable ſtate al openly  
 But one thyng he him prayed vtterly  
 That he no wight though they dyd enquire  
 Shołde nat tel whoos children that they were

But ſay the mayde ſhal wedded be  
 Vnto the marques of ſaluces anone  
 And as this erle was prayed ſo dyd he  
 For at the day ſet he on his wey is gone  
 Towarde ſaluces and lordes many one  
 In riche array this mayde for to gȝde  
 Her yong brother rydyng by his ſyde

Arrayed ful freſſhe in her manere  
 This freſſhe mayde ful of gemmys clere  
 Her brother whiche ſeuyn yere was of age  
 Arrayed ful freſſhe in his manere  
 And thus in gret noblesſe and glade chere  
 Towarde ſaluces ſpedyng theiȝ iournay  
 Fro day to day they ryden in theiȝ wey

Explicit pars Quarta  
 Et incipit pars Quinta

## The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

a    Among al this after the Wicked vsage  
     This marques is yet aboute to tempte more  
The vtterest preef of her corage  
fully to haue experience and lore  
If she were as stedefast as bifoze  
He on a day in open audience  
ful boistously hath sayd here this sentence

     Certis grisilde I hadde ynough of plesaunce  
To haue you to my wyf for youre godenesse  
As for your trouthe and youre obeysaunce  
Nat for youre lygnage ne for youre richesse  
But now knowe I in werzy sothfastnes  
That in grete losshippe if I wyl auyse  
There is grete seruitnde in sondre wyse

     I may nat do as euery plowman may  
My people constreyne me for to take  
A nother wyf and cry day by day  
And eke the pope rancor for to flake  
Concentith it that dar I bndretake  
And truly this moche I wol you say  
My newe wyf is comyng by the way

     Be strong of herte and boyde anone her place  
And that dowez that ye brought bnto me  
Takith it ayen I yeue you leue of my grace  
Retourneth to your faders house quod he  
No man may haue alwey prosperite  
With euyh herte I rede you to endure  
The stroke of fortune oz of auenture

     And she agayn aunswered in patience  
My lord quod she I wote and wyste alwey  
How that betwene youre magnificence  
And my pouerte. no wight can ne may  
Make any comparison. it is no nay



I ne helde me neuir digne in no manere  
 To be youre wyf ne be youre chamberer  
 And in this house there ye me lady made  
 The high god take I for wytnes  
 And also wysely he my soule glade  
 I neuir helde me lady ne maystres  
 But humble seruaunt to your worthynes  
 And euir shal while that my lyf my dure  
 Aboue enery worldly creature

That ye haue solong of youre benygnyte  
 Holde me in high honoure and nobley  
 Where as I was nat worthy for to be  
 That thanke I god and you to whom I prey  
 Forpelde it you ther is nomore to say  
 Vnto my fader gladly wold I wende  
 And with him duelle to my lyues ende

There I was fostryd of a childe ful smalle  
 Tyll I be dede my lyf there wol I lede  
 A wydowe cleue in body herte and alle  
 For sithen I paue to you my maydenhede  
 I am your true wyf it is no drede  
 God shelde suche a lordes wyf to take  
 A nother man to husbonde or to make

And of youre newe wyf god of his grace  
 So graunte you wele and prosperite  
 For I wol gladly yelde her my place  
 In whiche I was blissful wont to be  
 For sithen it lyketh you my lord quod she  
 That somtyme were al my hertes rest  
 That I shal go I wyl go whan ye lyst

But there as ye me profre suche dowayr  
 As I first brought it is wele in my mynde  
 It were my wrechid clothes nothyng fayre

## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

The whiche to me were harde to fynde  
O gode god how gentyl and how kynde  
ye semyd by your speche and your bisage  
The day that made was oure mariage

But soth is sayde alwey I fynde it trewe  
For in effecte y preynd it is on me  
Loue is nat olde as whan it is newe  
But certis lorde for none aduersite  
To dye in this caas it shal nat be  
That euir in worde in werke I shalke repente  
That I you geue my herte in hooke entent

My lorde ye wote that in my faders place  
ye dyd me strypp oute of my poure wede  
And richely ye me cladde of your grace  
To you brought I nought elles but of drede  
But seyth nakidnesse and my maydenhede  
And here agayn my clothyng I restore  
And eke my weddyng ryng for euir more

The remenaunt of your iewelless redy they be  
Within your chambere I dar it saufly seyn  
Naked oute of my faders house quode she  
I cam and naked must I turne agayn  
Al your plesaunce folowe wolde I feyne  
But yet I hope it be nat your entent  
That I smokelles oute of your paleys went

ye coude nat do so dishonest a thyng  
That thilke wombe in whiche your children lay  
Sholde bifoze the people in my walkyng  
Be seen al bare wherfore I you pray  
Let me nat lyke a worme go by the way  
Remembre you myn owne lorde so dere  
I was your wyf though I vnworthy were  
Wherfore in guerdon of my madaynhede



Whiche that I Brought and nat agayn here  
 As bouche sauf as gyue me to my mede  
 But suche a smoke as I Was wont to were  
 That I ther with may Wrye the Wombe of here  
 That Was your Wyf and here I take my leue  
 Of you myn owne lorde lest I you greue

The smoke quod he that thou hast vpon thy Bake  
 Let it be styll and here it fori with the  
 But wel bnneth that worde he spake  
 But Wente his wey for routhe and pyte  
 Bifore the folke her self striped hath se  
 And in her smoke with fote and here alle bare  
 Towarde her faders house is she fare

The folke her folowyng wepyng in her wey  
 And fortune euir they cursed as they gone  
 But she fro wepyng kept her eyendrye  
 Ne in this tyme worde spake she none  
 Her fader that thise tydnynges herde anone  
 Cursed the day and the tyme that nature  
 Shope him to be a lynes creature

Foz oute of doute this olde poure man  
 Was euir suspecte of her mariage  
 Foz euir he demyd sithen it began  
 That whan the lorde had fulfilled his coratge  
 He wolde thynke it were a desperatge  
 To his estate so lowe for to light  
 And boyden her as sone as euir he myght

Ayensst his doughter hastely goth he  
 Foz he by noyse of folke kne we her comyng  
 And with her olde cote as it myght be  
 He heueryd her ful soroufully wepyng  
 But on her body myght he it nat bryng  
 Foz rude was the clothe and she more of age

## The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

By daies fele than was her mariage  
Than with her fadre for a certayn space  
Duellyd this floure of wyfly pacience  
That neuir by her worde ne by her face  
Biforn the folke ne in her absence  
Ne she wyd she that her was done offence  
Ne of her high estate no remembraunce  
Ne hadde she as by any maner countenaunce

No wondre was for in her grete estate  
Her goost was euir in pleygh humylite  
No tendre mouthe ne herte delicate  
No pompe ne semblaunce of rialte  
But ful of paciente benygnyte  
Discrete and prydelesse and ay honourable  
And ay to her husbonde meke and stable

Men speke of Job and moost for his humblenesse  
As clerkes whan them lyst can wele endite  
Namely of men but in sothfastnes  
Though clerkes pryse women but a lyte  
Ther can no man in humblenes them acuyte  
As women can ne can be half so true  
As women been but it be false of newe

Explicit Quinta pars

Et incipit pars Sexta

**f** Ro Boloyne is this erle of paup come  
Of whiche the fame spronge bothe les & more  
And in the peoples eris alle and some  
Was tolde how that he a newe marke sesse  
With him brought in suche pompe and riches  
Thot neuir was ther seen with mannys ey  
So noble arrape in al west lumbardy  
The marques whiche that shope and knewe al this



Or that this erle was come sent his messagge  
 For that sely poure creature grysilidis  
 And she with humble herte and glade bysagge  
 Nat with no swellpyng thought in her coragge  
 Cam at his heest and on her knees her sette  
 And reuerently and wysely she him gret

Grysilde quod he my Wyl is ful vtterly  
 This mayden that weddyd shalbe to me  
 Receyued be to morowe also ryally  
 As it is possible in myn house to be  
 And eke that euery wight in his degre  
 Haue his estate in spttynge and in seruise  
 And high plesauce as ye can best deuyse

I haue no woman suffisaunt certayn  
 The chambres for to araye in ordeuauce  
 After my lyst and therfore wolde I sayn  
 That thyn were al suche manere of gouernaunce  
 Thou knowest eke of olde al my plesauce  
 Though thyn araye be badde and euyl besey  
 Do thy deuoure yet at the lest wey

Nat only lorde that I am glade quod she  
 To do youre lust but I desire also  
 you first to please and serue in my degre  
 Withoute fayntyng and shalie euir mo  
 Ne neuir for no wele ne for no wo  
 Ne shal the goost within my herte stynt  
 To loue you best with alle my true entent

And with that worde she gan the house to dight  
 And tables for to sette and beddes for to make  
 And peyned her to do alle that she myght  
 Prayng the chamberers for goddes sake  
 To haste them and fast swepe and shake  
 And she the moost seruyfable of alle

## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

Hath euery chambre arayed and his halle  
Aboute the vndryn this erle to gan light  
That with him brought these noble children twey  
For whiche the people ran to se that sight  
Of their araye richely they were beseye  
And than at erst among them they sey  
That walter was no foole though that him lest  
To chaunge his wyf for it was for the best  
For she is fayrer as they deme alle  
Than is grisilde and more tendre of age  
And fayrer fruyte bitwene them shal fal  
And more plesaunt for her high bygnage  
Her brother eke so fayre was of bysage  
That them to se the people hath caught plesaunce  
Comendynge now the marques gouernaunce  
O stormy people euer vn sadde and vntrue  
Ay vndiscrete and chaungynge as a bane  
Delitynge euer in romble that is new  
For lyke the mone ay waye and wane  
Ay ful of clappynge dere ynough a Jane  
yours dome is fals yours constaunce euyl preuyth  
A ful grete foule is he that on you leuyth  
Thus sayd sad folke in that cite  
Whan that the people garyd bp and down  
For they were glade right for the nouelte  
To haue a newe lady of their toun  
No more of this now make I mencion  
But to grisilde agayn I wyl me dresse  
And tel her constaunce and her besynesse  
Ful besy was grisilde in euery thyng  
That to the fest was tho appertynent  
Right naught was she abashed of her clothyng  
Though it were rude and somdele eke to rent



## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

But With glade chere to the gate is Went  
With othez folke to grete the markefesse  
And after that doth her Besynesse

With right glade chere she his gastes receyued  
And so connyngly eche in his degre  
That no defaute no man perceyued  
But ay they Wondred What she myght be  
That in so poure array Was for to se  
And coude suche honoure and reuerence  
And Worthely they prysen her prudence

In alle this meane While she ne stynte  
This mayde and eke her Brother to comende  
With alle her hert in ful benygne entent  
So wele that no man coude her pryce amende  
But at the last Whan that lordes Wende  
To sitte down to mete he gan to calle  
Grisilde as she Was besy in the halles

Grisilde quod he as it Were in his pley  
How lyketh the my Wyf and her beaute  
Right wele quod she my lord for in gode fey  
A fayrer sawe I neuir none than is she  
I pray to god yeue her gode prosperite  
And so hope I he wol to you sende  
Plesaunce ynough to your lyues ende

Thing I beche you and warne also  
That ye nat prycke With no tourmentynge  
This tendre mayde as ye haue doo moo  
For she is fostred in her norissching  
More tenderly and to my supposynge  
She coude nat aduersite wele endure  
As coude a poure fostred creature

And Whan this Walter sawe her pacience  
Her glade chere and no malice at alle

And he so ofte hadde do to her offence  
 And she ay constant and sadde as a wal  
 Contynuyng euir her innocence ouir alle  
 This sturpy marques gan his hert dresse  
 To rewe bpon her wisly stedefastnes

This is ynough grisilde myn quod he  
 Be now no more agast ne euyl appayed  
 I haue thy feyth and thy benyggnite  
 As wele as euir woman was assayed  
 In grette estate oz pouerly arayed  
 Now knowe I dere wyf thy stedfastnes  
 And her in armes toke and gan her kyssse

And she for wondre toke of it no kepe  
 She herde nat what thyng he to her sayde  
 She ferde as she had stert oute of her slepe  
 Tyl she oute of her masidnes abreyed  
 Grisilde quod he by god that for vs deyed  
 Thou arte my wyf ne none othez I haue  
 Ne neuir had. so god my soule saue

This is thy doughter whiche thou hast supposed  
 To be my wyf that othez feithfully  
 Shal be myn heire as I haue purposed  
 Thou bare him in thy body truly  
 At Bolepyne haue I kept them pryuely  
 Take them ayen for now mayst thou nat say  
 That thou hast loyn none of thy children tway

And folke that othez wyse haue sayde by me  
 I warne them wele that I haue doon this dede  
 For no malice ne for no cruelte  
 But for to assay in the thy womanhede  
 And nat to sle my children god forbede  
 But for to kepe them pryuely and styлле  
 Tyl I thy purpos knewe and thy wyлле



## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

Whan she this herde in swonyng down she fallith  
For pytous iope and after her swounyng  
She to bothe her yong children callith  
And in her armes ful tenderly wepyng  
Embraced them and tenderly kyssyng  
Ful lyke a modre with her salt teris  
She badith bothe theire disage and her heres

O whiche a pytous thyng it was to se  
Her swounyng and her pytous boyce to here  
Graunt mercy lord god thanke you quod she  
That ye haue saued me my children dere  
Now reche I neuiz to be dede eyn here  
Sithen I stonde in your loue and in your grace  
No doute of deth ne whan my spirite pace

O tendre o dere o yong children myne  
Your woful modre wende ful stedfastly  
That cruel houndes or som foule wermyn  
Had etyn you but god of his mercy  
And your benygne fadre so tenderly  
Hath doon you kepe and in that same stounde  
Al sodenly she swapt down to grounde

And in her swoune so sadly holdith she  
Her children two whan she gan them embrace  
That with grete flight and grete difficulte  
The children from her azme gan they arace  
O many a teze on many a pytous face  
Down ran of them that stode there besyde  
Whneth aboute her myght they abyde

Walter her gladith and her sorowe skakith  
She ryseth vp and abasseth from her traunce  
And euery wight her iope and fest makith  
Tyl she hath caughtt agayn her countenaunce  
Walter doth her so feythfulle plesaunce

## The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

That it was deynpte for to se the chere  
Bitwene them two now they be mette in fere

Thise ladies whan they theire tyme say  
Haue taken her and in to chambre anone  
And striped her oute of her rude array  
And in a clothe of golde that bright shone  
With a crowne of many a riche stone  
Upon her hede. they in to the halle her brought  
And there she was honoured as her ought

Thus hath this pytous day a blisful ende  
For euery man and woman doth his myght  
This day in myrthe and reuel to spende  
Tyl on the welkyn shone the sterryslight  
For more solempne in euery mannys sight  
This feste was and of grete costage  
Than was the reuel of theire mariage

Ful many a yere in high prosperite  
Pyuen these two in concorde and in rest  
And richely his doughter married he  
Vnto a lorde one of the worthiest  
Of al Itayle and than in pease and rest  
His wyues fadre in his courte he kepith  
Tyl the soule oute of the body crepith

His sonne succedith in his heritage  
In rest and pees after his faders day  
And fortunate was eke in mariage  
Al put he nat his wyf in grete assay  
This worlde is nat so strong it is no nay  
As it hath been in olde tymes yore  
And herknyth what this autouze sayth therfore

This story is sayd nat for that wyues sholde  
Folowe Grisilde as in high humylite  
For it were importable though they wolde



## The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

But for that euery Wight in his degre  
Shulde be constante in alle aduersite  
As was grisilde wherfore petrark writeth  
This story whiche with high style he endityth  
For sithen a woman was so pacient  
Vnto a mortal man wele more we ought  
Receyue al in gode that god vs sent  
For grette shylle is. he preue that he wrought  
But he ne temptith no man that he bought  
As sayth seint Jame if ye his epistel rede  
He preuyth folke but a day it is no nede

And suffreth vs as for oure exercise  
With sharpe scorges and aduersite  
ful ofte to be bete in sondry wise  
Nat for to knowe oure wylle but certis he  
Or we were born knewe al oure freelte  
And for oure best is alle his gouernaunce  
Pete vs lye than in bertuous suffraunce

But one worde herk neth lordynge or I go  
It were fulharde to fynde now a dayes  
Grisilides in al a countre thre or two  
For if they were put to suche assayes  
The golde of them hath so badde alayes  
With bras. for though it be fayre at eye  
It wolde rather brist a tyme than plye

For whiche here for the wyues loue of Bathe  
Whoos lyf and secte myghty god mayntene  
In high maystrye or elles were if scathe  
I wyl with lusty hert fresshe and grene  
Say you a song to glade you I wene  
And let vs stynt of earnest matere  
Herk neth my songe that sayth in this manere

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Venuoye de Chaucez a les  
marietz te nre temps

¶ Grisilde is dede and eke her pacience  
And bothe at ones buried in Itayle  
For whiche I crye in open audience  
No wedded man so hardy be to assayle  
His wifes pacience in truste to fynde  
Grysilides. for certayn he shal fayle  
¶ A noble wyues ful of high prudence  
Let nat humylite poure tinges nayle  
Ne let no clerke haue cause of diligence  
To wryte of you a stozz of grete meruayle  
As of grisilde pacient and kynde  
Lest cheuache you swallow in her entrayle  
Foloweth ecco that holdith no silence  
But euir aunswerpnt at the countertayle  
Be nat a daffyd for your innocence  
But sharply take on you the gouernayle  
Enprentith wele that lesson in your mynde  
For comune proufet seyth it may auayle  
¶ The arche wyues stondeth at defence  
Sithen ye be strong as is a grete camayle  
Ne suffre nat that men do you offence  
But sklendre wyues as feble in batayle  
Bethe egre as a tigre is fer in ynde  
By clappynt as a mylle I you counseyle  
¶ Ne dredith them nat do them no reuerence  
For thouth thy husbonde armyd be in mayle  
Thy arowes of thy crabbid eloquence  
Shal perse his brest and eke his auentayle  
In ielousye I rede eke that thou him blynde  
And shalt make him couche as a quayle  
If thou be fayre there folke been in presence



## The Nonnes prologue

Shewe thou thy visage and thyn apparayle  
If thou be foule be fre of thy dispence  
To gete the frendes ay do thy trauayle  
Be ay of chere as light as leef on lynde  
And lete him care wepe wrynge and wayle

Here endith the tale of the clerke of Dvenforde

Verba hospitis

t His worthy clerke whan endyd was his tale  
Dure hoost sayde and swore by rockes bones  
We were lyuez than a barelle of ale  
My wyf at home herde this legende onys  
This is a gentyl tale for the nonys  
As to my purpos wylt ye my wylle  
But thyng that wylle nat be let it be styll

Here endith the wordes of the hoost

Here begynneth the Nonnys prologue

t He mynistre and nozsshynge bnto byces  
Whiche that men clepe in englysshe ydelnes  
Whiche that is porter of the pate of delices  
To eschewen and by their contrayr them oppresse  
That is to say by lesful besynes  
Wele ough t we to done alle oure entent  
Best that the feende with ydelnesse vs hent  
For he with his thousand cordes slye  
Contynually vs wayeth to be clappe  
Whan he may man in ydelnesse aspye  
He can solightly catche him in his trappe  
Tyl that a man be hent right by the lappe  
He nys nat ware the fende hath him in honde  
Wele ough t vs werke and ydelnesse with stonde  
And though men drede neuiz for to dye  
Yet se men wele by reason doutles

## The Nonnes prologue

That ydelnesse is open slogardy  
Of whiche ther comyth neuir no gode encrease  
And se that slough her holdith in a lees  
Only for to slepe and ete and drynke  
And to deuoure al that othez swynke

And for to put vs from suche ydelnes  
That cause is of grete confusioun  
I haue here doon my feythful besynesse  
After the legende and translacioun  
Right so thy glorious lyf and passioun  
Thou with thy garlonde wrought of rose of lyle  
The mene I mayde and martyr scint Cecily

And thou that floure arte of virgynnes alle  
Of whome that Bernarde lust so wele to wryte  
To the at my first begynnynge I calle  
Thou comforte of vs wreches do me endite  
Thy maydens deth that way through her merite  
The eternalle lyf and of the feend victory  
As men may after rede in her story

Thou mayde and modre doughter of thy sonne  
Thou welke of mercy synful soules to cure  
In whom that god of bounte chaas for to wonne  
Thou humble and high ouir euery creature  
Thou noblest so ferforth ouir nature  
That no disdeyne thy maker hadde of kynde  
His sonne in blode and flesshe to clothe and wynde

Whiche in the cloyster of thy blissful sides  
Toke mannes shappe the eterne loue and peas  
That of thy tryne compass lorde and gyde is  
Whom heuyn and erthe and see withouten lees  
As herpen and thou virgyn wembelees  
Bare of thy body and duellest mayde pure  
The creatoure of euery creature



Assemblyd is the magnificence  
 With mercy godenesse and with pyte  
 That thou that arte the soun of excellence  
 Nat only helpest them that prayeth the  
 But often tyme of thy benignyte  
 Ful frely oz that man thyn helpe seche  
 Thon gost bifoze and art ouze soules leche  
 Now helpe thou blisful and meke fayre mayde  
 We slemyd wretche in this deserte of galle  
 Thynke on the woman of Canane that sayde  
 That whelpes ete some of the the cromes smalle  
 That from theire lordes table been y falle  
 And though that I vnworthy sonne of eue  
 Be synful yet accepte my beleue

And for that seyth is dede withoute werkes  
 So for to werke geue me wytte and space  
 That I be quytte from thens there moost derke is  
 O thou that art so fayre and ful of grace  
 Be myn aduocate in that high place  
 There as withouten ende is sung of anne  
 Thou cristes modre doughter dere of anne

And of thy light my soule in prysonlight  
 That troubled is by the cogitacioun  
 Of my body and also by the wight  
 Of erthly lust and false affectioun  
 Of haupn of the refute o saluacioun  
 Of them that been in sorowe and distresse  
 Now helpe for to my worke I wol me dresse

yet I pray you that rede that I write  
 Forgeue me that I do no diligence  
 This ilke story besely to endite  
 For bothe haue I the wordes and the sentence  
 Of him that at the seyntes reuerence

## The Nonnes prologue

The story wrote and folowed her leggende  
And pray you that ye wyl my werke amende

First wolde I you the name of seint cecily  
Expoune as men may in her story se  
It is to say in englysshe heuynnes lyfe  
For pure chastnes of birginyte

Or for she whithnes had of honeste  
And grene of conscience and of good fame  
The Iwete sauoure lyly was her name

Or cecily is to say the wey to blynde  
For she ensample was by good techyng

Or elles cecily as I writen fynde  
Asioyned by a maner conyng

Of heuyn and lya in her in figuryng  
The heuyn is set for though of holynes  
And lya for her lastyng besynesse

Cecily may eke be sayd in this manere  
Wantyng of blyndenesse for her gretelicht

Of sapience and for her the wys clere

Or elles so this maydens name bright

Of heuyn and leos comyth of whiche by right  
Men myght her wele the heuyn of people calle  
Ensamble of gode and wyse werkes alle

For leos people in englysshe is for to say  
And right as men may in the heuyn se

The sonne and mone the sterres euery wey  
Right somen goostly in this mayden fre

Sawyng of feyth the grette magnamynite  
And eke the clerenes ful of sapience

And sondry werkes bright of excellence

And right so as these philosophers wypte  
That heuyn is swyft and rounde and eke brennyng  
Right so was fayne cecily the whyte



# The Nonnes Tale

Ful swyft and in euery gode workyng  
And rounde and hole in gode perseueryng  
And brennyng euir in charite ful bright  
Now haue I declared you what she hight

Here endith the Nonnes prologue  
And begynneth her tale



¶ His mayden bright Cecily as her legend sayth  
Was comen of Romaynes and of noble kynde  
And from her cradyl by fostryd in the feyth  
Of crist and bare his gospel in her mynde  
She neuir seced as I wryten fynde  
Of her prayer and god to loue and drede  
Besekyng him to kepe her maydenhede  
And whan this mayde sholde bynto a man  
y weddyd be that was ful yong of age  
Whiche that y clypped was Valerian

## The Nonnes Tale

And day was come of her mariage  
She ful deuoute and humble in her corage  
Vndre her robe of golde that sat ful seyre  
Had next her flesshe y cladde her in an heyre  
And while that the orgaynes made melody  
To god aboue thus in her herte song she  
O lord my body and eke my soule tye  
On wemmyd lest I confounded be  
And for his loue that dyed vpon the tre  
Euery secounde and thridde day she fast  
Ay abydyng in her orisons ful fast

The nyght cam and to bedde must she goon  
With her husbonde as it was the manere  
And pryuely she sayde to him anone  
O swete and wele belouyd spouse dere  
Ther is a conceple and ye wyl it here  
Whiche that right fayne I wolde to you sey  
So that ye swere ye wyl nat it bewry

Valerian gan fast to her swere  
That for no caas ne thyng that myght be  
He sholde neuir to none bewrethyn her  
And than at erst to him sayde she  
I haue an aungel whiche that lounyth me  
That with grete loue wherso I wake or slepe  
Is redy ay my body for to kepe

And if that he may fele oute of drede  
That ye me touche or loue in bylonye  
He right anone wyl sle you with the dede  
And in poure pouth the thus shal ye dye  
And if that ye in clene lyf me tye  
He wol you loue as me for poure cleneesse  
And shewe to you his ioy and his brightnes  
This Valerian corrected as god wolde



## The Nonnes Tale

Aunswerde agayn if I shal truste the  
Pete me that aungel se and him beholde  
And if that it a verzy aungel be  
Than wol I do as thou hast prayed me  
And if thou loue a nother man for sothe  
Right with this swerde than wol I sle you both

Cecily aunswerde anone right in this wyse  
If that ye lyst the aungel shal ye se  
So that ye trowe on criste and you baptyse  
Goth forth to via appia quod she  
That from this toun ne stondith but myles thre  
And to the poure folkes that there dwell  
Sey them as that I shal you telle

Tel them that I Cecily you to them sent  
To shewe you gode vrbā the olde  
For secrete nedes and for gode entent  
And whan that ye seint vrbā haue beholde  
Telle him the wordes that I to you tolde  
And whan that he hath purged you from synne  
Than shal ye see the aungel or we twynne

This valerian is in to the place gone  
And right as he was taught by her lernynge  
He fonde this holy man vrbā anone  
Among the seyntes berielles slowtynge  
And he anone withouten tarynge  
Dyd his messaige and whan that he hadde tolde  
Vrbā for ioye gan his hondes byholde

The teris from his eyen lete he falle  
Almyghty god o Jesu crist quod he  
Sowez of chaste councel hierd of vs alle  
The fruyte of that sede of chastite  
That thou hast sowe in Cecily take to the  
No lyke a besy be withouten gyle

## The Nonnes Tale

The seruyth ay thyn owne thralle cecile  
For that spouse that she toke but newe  
ful lyke a fers loun she sendith here  
As meke as euir was any lambe to ewe  
And with that worde anone there gan appere  
An olde man y cladde in white clothes clere  
That hadde a boke with lettre of gold in honde  
And gan bifoze valerian for to stonde

Valerian as dede fel down for drede  
Whan he this olde man sawe stondynge so  
Whiche forth with anon he herde him rede  
O lord of alle o feyth o god withouten mo  
O cristendome o fadre of alle also  
Aboue alle and ouir alle euery where

These wordes al with gold writen were  
Whan this was reddde than sayd this olde man  
Peurst thou this thing or no say ye or nay  
I leue al thyng quod valerian  
For sother thyng than this I dar wele say  
Vndre heuyn no wight thynke may  
Tho banysshed this olde man he ne wyst where  
And pope brban him cristned right there

Valerian goth home and fyndeth Cecily  
Within his chambre with an aungel stonde  
This aungel hadde of roses and of lylly  
Crowmys two the whiche he bare in honde  
And first to cecily as I vnderstonde  
He gaue that one. and after gan he take  
That othez to valerian her make

With body clene and vnwemmyd thought  
Kepith ay wele these crownes quod he  
From paradise to you them haue I brought  
Ne neuir more shal they rotyn be



## The Nonnes Tale

Ne lese theire swete sauoure trustith me  
Ne neuir wight ne shalle se them with eye  
But he be chaste and hate belony

And thou Valerian for thou so sone  
Assentyd to goddes counceyle also  
Say what thou lyst and thou shalt haue thy bone  
I haue a brother quod Valerian tho  
That in this worlde I loue noman so  
I pray you that my brother may haue grace  
To knowe the trouthe as I do in this place

The aungel sayde god lyketh thy request  
And bothe with the palme of martirdome  
ye shal come into this blisful feest  
And with that worde tyburce his brother come  
And whan that he the sauoure vndre nom  
Whiche that the roses and the lylpes cast  
Within his hert he gan to wondre fast

And sayd I wondre this tyme of the yere  
Whens that this swete sauoure comyth so  
Of roses and lylpes that I smelle here  
For though I hadde them in myn hondes two  
The sauoure myght in me no deppez go  
The swete smelle that in my herte I fynde  
Hath chaunged me al in an other kynde

Valerian sayde two crownes haue we  
Snowe white and rose rede that shyneth clere  
Whiche that thyn eyen haue no myght to se  
And as thou smellyst through my prayer  
So shalt thou se them leue brother dere  
If it so be thou withouten flouthe  
Beleue a right and knowe verzy trouthe

Tyburce aunswerde sayst thou this to me  
In sotfastnes or in dreame I herken this

## The Nonnes Tale

In dremps quod Valerian haue we be  
Vnto this tyme brother myn y wys  
But now at erst oure duellyng in trouthe is  
How wotest thou this quod Tiburce & in what wyse  
Quod Valerian that shal I the deuyse

The aungel of god hath me the trouthe y taughte  
Whiche thou shalt se if thou wylt renye  
The ydolles and be clene and elles naught  
And of the myracle of the se crownes tway  
Seynt ambrose in his preface lyst for to say  
Solempnely this noble doctoure dere  
Comendith it and sayth in this manere

The palme of martirdome for to rescue  
Seint cecile fulfilled of goddes yeste  
The worlde and eke her chambre gan she weyue  
Witnes Cecily and Tiburces shryfte  
To whiche god of his bounte wolde shyfte  
Crownes two of floures swete smellynge  
And made his aungel them the crownes brynge

The mayde hath brought them to the blisse aboue  
The worlde hath wylt that it is worthy certayn  
Deuocioun and chastite wele for to loue  
Tho she wde him cecily alle open and pleyne  
That al ydolles been but a thyng in bayne  
For they be dombe and therto they be deef  
And charged him his ydolles for to leef

Who so nat trowith this a beest he is  
Quod tho Tiburce if I shalle nat lye  
And she gan kysse his brest that herde this  
And was ful glade he coude trouthe aspye  
This day I take the for myn alpe  
Sayde this blissyd fayre mayden dere  
And after that she sayde as ye may here



## The Nonnes Tale

So right so as the loue of crist quod she  
Made me thy brothers wyf right in this wyse  
Anone for myn alpe here take I the  
Sithen that thou wylt thyn ydelles dyspyse  
Go With thy brother now and the baptyse  
And make the cleue so that thou may beholde  
That aungelles face whiche thy brother of tolde

Tiburce aunswerd and sayd brother dere  
First tel me whether I shal and to what man  
To whom quod he com forth with right gode chere  
I wol the lede vnto the pope brban  
To brban brother myn valerian  
Quod tho tyburce wylt thou me thydre lede  
Me thynketh that it were a wondre drede

Ne mene ye nat brban quod he tho  
That is so ofte dampned to be dede  
And woneth in halles alwey to and fro  
And dar nat onys put forth his hede  
Men sholde him brenne in a fyre so rede  
If he were founde if men myght him aspye  
And we also to bere him company

And while we seke that dyuinyte  
That is hyd in heuyn pryuelp  
Algate brent in this worlde shal we be  
To whom Cecily aunswerde boldly  
Men myght drede wele and skilfully  
This lyf to lose myn owne dere brother  
If this were lyuynge only and none other

But there is better lyf in other place  
That neuir shalbe lost ne drede the nought  
Whiche goddes sonne vs tolde throughe his grace  
That faders sonne hath al thyng wrought  
And alle that wrought is with a skilful thought

## The Nonnes Tale

The goost that from the fadre gan procede  
Hath souled him withouten any drede

By worde and by myracle be goddes sonne  
Whan he was in the worlde declared here  
That there is othez lyf there men may wonne  
To whom aunswerd tyburce o sustre dere  
Ne saydest thou right now in this manere  
Thez nas but one god lord in sothfastnes  
And now of thre how mayst thou bere wytnes

That shal I tel quod she or that I go  
Right as a man hath sapientes thre  
Memory engyne and intellecte also  
So in suche beynng of dypuinyte  
Thre persones may there right wele be  
Tho gan she there ful besily him preche  
Of cristes sonne and of his peynes teche

And many poyntes of his passioun  
How goddes sonne in this worlde was withholde  
To do mankynde pleyne remissioun  
That been bounde in synnes and cares colde  
Alle these thynges she to tyburce tolde  
And after this tyburce in god entent  
With balerian to pope brban went

That thanked god and with glade hert and sight  
He cristned him and made him in that place  
Parfyte in his lernynng goddes knyght  
And after this tyburce gat suche grace  
That euery day he sawe in tyme and space  
The aungel of god and euery maner bone  
That he god ashyd it was spedde ful sone

It were ful harde by ordre for to sayn  
How many wondres iesus for him wrought  
But at the last to telle shorte and playn



## The Nonnes Tale

The sergēauntes of the toun them sougħt  
And them bi fore almache the prefecte brought  
Whiche them apposed and kne we al theire entent  
And to the ymage of Iubiter them sent

And sayd who so wol do no sacrifice  
Swappe of his hede this is my sentence here  
Anone these martirs that I you deuyse  
One maximus that was an officere  
Of the prefectes and his counsellere  
Them hent and the seyntes forth ladde  
Him self he wept for pyte that he hadde

Whan maximus hadde herde the seyntes loze  
He gat him of the turmentours leue  
And had them to his house withouten more  
And with theire prechynge or it was eue  
They gan fro the turmentoures for to reue  
And from mayme and fro his folke echone  
The fals seyth to trow in god allone

Cecily cam whan it was woyte nyght  
With prestys that them cristned al in fere  
And after ward whan day was woyen light  
Cecily sayde them with a ful stede fast chere  
Now cristes owen knyghtes leef and dere  
Cast al a wey the werkis of derknes  
And arme you with the armes of brightnes

ye haue forsoth done a grette batayle  
your cours is done youre seyth hath you conseruyd  
Goth to the crowne of lyf that may nat fayle  
The rightfulle iugge whiche ye haue seruyd  
Shal yeue it you as ye haue it deseruyd  
And whan this thyng was sayde as I deuyse  
Men ledde them forth to do sacrifice

But whan they were to the place y brought

## The Nonnes Tale

To telle shortly the conclusioun  
They nolde encence ne sacrifice right naught  
But on theire knees sytten them adoun  
With humble herte and sadde deuotioun  
And losen bothe theire hedes in the place  
Thei soules went to the kyng of grace

This maximus that sa we this thyng betyde  
With pytous teris tolde it anone right  
That he thei soules sa we to heuyn glyde  
With aungels ful of clernes and light  
And with his worde conuertyd many a wight  
For whiche almachius dyd him so to bete  
With whippes of lede tyl he his lyp gan lete

Cecily him toke and buried him anone  
By tyburce and Valerian sothly  
Within her buryng place vndre the stone  
And after this almachius hastely  
Badde his mynistres fetchen openly  
Cecily so that she myght in his presence  
Do sacrifice and subite encence

But they conuertyd at her wyse lore  
Wepte ful sore and yaued ful credence  
Vnto her worde and cryde more and more  
Crist goddes sonne whiche withoute difference  
Is very god this is oure sentence  
That hath a seruaunt so gode him to serue  
This with o boyce we crye though we sterue

Almachius that herde of this doyng  
Bad fetchen Cecily that he myght her se  
And alder first this was his askyng  
What maner woman art thou quod he  
I am a gentyl woman born quod she  
I aske it the quod he though it the greue



## The Nonnes Tale

Of thy religioun and of thy beleue

Why than began ye poure questioun folisly

Quod she that wolde two aunsweres conclude

In one demaunde ye ashyd lewdly

Almache aunswerde to that similitude

Of whens comyth thyn aunswere so rude

Of whens quod she. Whan that she was freyned

Of conscience and of gode seyth bnfeyned

Almachius sayde takest thou none hede

Of my power and she aunswerd him thys

poure myght quod she is ful lytel to drede

for euery mortalle mannys power nys

But lyke a bladder ful of wynde y wys

for with a nedelles poynte whan it is blowe

May alle the bost of it be leyde ful lowe

Ful wrongfully began thou quod he

And in wrong is yet al thy perseueraunce

wotest thou nat how oure prynces mighty and fre

haue thus comaunded and made ordenaunce

That euery cristen wight shal haue penaunce

But if that he his cristendome withsay

And goon al quyte if he wyl it reney

poure princes erzen as poure nobley doth

Quod tho cecile in a wode sentence

ye make vs gyltye and it is nat sothe

for ye that knowe wele oure innocence

for asmoche as we do ay reuerence

To criste and for we bere a cristen name

ye put on vs a cryme and eke a blame

But we that knowe that name so

for vertuous we may it nat withsaye

Almache aunswerde these one of these two

Do sacrifice oz cristendome reney

That thou may schape by that weye  
At whiche worde this holy blissful mayde  
Can for to laughe and to the iuge sayde

O iuge confused in thy nycte  
Wolt thou that I resceyue innocence  
To make me a wyched wight quod she  
Lo he dissimyleth here in audience  
He starith and wodith in his aduertence  
To whom almache sayd o sely wretche  
Ne wotest thou nat hou fer my wytte may stretch

Haue nat oure myghty prynces penyng  
To me both powez and auctorite  
To make folke bothe to dye and lyuen  
Why spekyfst thou than so proudely to me  
I speke naught but stedfastly quod she  
Nat proudely for I say for my syde  
We hate dedely that byce of pryde

And if thou drede nat a soth for to here  
Than wyl I she we al openly by right  
Thou that hast made a ful gretelc syng here  
Thou sayst thy prynces haue yene the myght  
Bothe for to sle and for to quychen a wight  
That thou mayst only but lyf bereue  
Thou hast none othez powez ne no leue

But thou mayst say thy princes haue the maked  
Mynistre of deth for if thou speke of mo  
Thou liest for thy powere is ful nakyd  
Do wey thy boldnesse sayd almache tho  
And do sacrifice to oure goddes or thou go  
I reche nat what wrongt thou me profer  
For I can suffre as can a philosopher

But that wronges may I nat endure  
That thou spekyfst of oure goddes here quod he



## The Nonnes Tale

O Cecily aunswere o nyce creature  
Thou saydest no worde sithen thou spakest to me  
That I ne knowe ther with thy nyce  
And that thou were in euery maner wyse  
A lewde officer and a lewde iustise

There lacketh no thyng of thy better eyen  
But thou art blynde for thyng that we se al  
That is a stone that men may wele aspyen  
That ilke stone a god thou wylt it calle  
I rede the let thy honde vpon it falle  
And taste it wele and stone thou shalt it fynde  
Sithen that thou seest nat with thy eyen blynde

It is a shame that the people shal  
So scorne the and laughe at thy folly  
For comonly men wote it wele ouir alle  
That myghty god is in heuynnes hye  
And these ymages wele thou mayst aspye  
To the ne to them self may do no profette  
For in effecte they be nat worthe a myte

This and suche other wordes sayde she  
And he woyte wrothe and bad men sholde her lide  
Home vnto her house and in her house quod he  
Brenne her in a bathe of flamys rede  
And as he badde right was it do in dede  
For in a bathe they gan her fast shyppen  
And nyght and day fyre they vndre betryn

The long nyght and eke the day also  
For al the fyre and eke the grete hete  
She sat al colde and felt no maner wo  
It made her nat a droppe for to swete  
But in that bathe her lyf she motlete  
For almachius with a ful wyched eulent  
To sle her in bathe his sonde to her sent

## The Nonnes Tale

Thre strokes in the necke he smote her tho  
The turmentoure but for no maner chaunce  
He myght nat smyte her necke a two  
And for ther was that tyme an ordenaunce  
That noman sholde do no persone suche penaunce  
The fourth stroke to smyte soft or soze  
This turmentoure ne durst do no more

But half dede with her necke corruen there  
He left her lye and on his wey he went  
The cristen folke whiche that aboute her were  
With shetes haue the blode bp hent  
Thre daies lyued she thus in this turment  
And neuir cesed them the feyth to teche  
That she had fostryd them she gan to preche

And them she paue her meuables and her thyng  
And to gode brban betoke them tho  
And sayde I asked this of heuyn kynng  
To haue respite thre daies and no mo  
To recomende to you or that I go  
These soules lo and that I may do wirche  
Here of my house perpetually a chirche

Seint brban with his dekyngs pryueky  
The body fet and buried it by nyght  
Among his othez seyntes honestly  
Her house the chirche of seynt cecily hight  
Saynt brban halowed it as he wele myght  
In whiche vnto this day in noble wyse  
Men do to criste and to his seyntes seruise

Here endith the Nonnes tale  
And here betynneth the prologue  
Of the chanons yeman



## The Nonnes Tale

W han tolde was the lyf of seint Cecile  
Or we hadde ryden fully fyue myle  
At Boughston vndre ble vs gan a take  
A man that clothed was in clothes blake  
And vndrenethe he ware a white surplice  
His hakney whiche was of pomelgryce  
So swette he that wondre was to se  
It semyd that he hadde pryched myles thre  
Aboute the patrel stode the some ful hye  
He was of some as flyched as a pye  
The hakney eke that his yeman rode vpon  
So swette that vnnethes myght it goon  
A male twyfolde vpon his croppyn lay  
It semyd that he carped lytel aray  
Alright for some rode this worthy man  
And in myn herte to wondre I began  
What that he was tyl that I vndrestode  
How that his cloke was sowed to his hode  
For whiche whan I hadde longt auysed me  
I demyd him som chanon for to be  
His hatte hyng at his bahe down by a lace  
For he hadde ryden more than trotte or pace  
He rode ay prychyng as he were wode  
A clotekeef he hadde leyde vndre his hode  
For swete and for to kepe his hede fro hete  
But it was ioye for to se him swete  
His forehede droppyd as a stylatory  
Were ful of planteyn or of peritory  
And whan he was come he gan crye  
God saue quod he this ioly company  
Fast haue I pryched quod he for youre sake  
Bicause that I wolde you ouir take  
To ryde in this mery company

The prologue of the chanons yem.

His yeman was eke ful of curtesye  
And sayde sires now in the morowe tyde  
Dute of youre hostrye I sawe you ryde  
And warned here my lord and souerayn  
Whiche that to ryde with you is ful sayn  
For his disporte he loueth daliaunce  
Frend for thy warnyng god gyue the gode chaunce  
Than sayde oure hoost certayn it wolde seme  
Thy lord were wyse and so I may wele deme  
He is ful iocunde also dar I ley  
Can he ought telle a mery tale or twey  
With whiche he glade may this company  
Who sir my lord. ye sir withouten lye  
He can of myrthe and eke of iolite  
Nat but ynow also sir trustith me  
And ye him knewe as wele as do I  
Ye wolde wondre how wele and craftely  
He coude werke and that in sondry wyse  
He hath taken on him many a grete empryse  
Whiche were ful hard for any that is here  
To bryng aboute but they of him it lere  
As homely as he rydeth amonges you  
If ye him knewe it wolde be for youre prow  
Ye wolde nat forgoon his acqeyntaunce  
For mekyl good I dar ley in balaunce  
Al that I haue in my possession  
He is a man of high discrecioun  
I warne you he is a passyng wyse man  
Wele quod oure hoost I pray the telle me than  
Is he a clerke or none tel me what he is  
A clerke nay nay he is gretér than a clerke ywys  
Sayd this yeman and in wordes fe we  
Hoost and of his craft somwhat wol I shewe



The prologue of the chanons yeman

Sir my lord can suche a subtelte  
But alle his crafte ye may nat wytte of me  
For al the grounde to caunterbury town  
He coude alle clene turne by so down  
And paue it al with siluer and with golde  
And whan this yeman hath thus tolde  
Vnto oure hoost, he sayde benedicite  
This thing is wondre merueylous to me  
Sithen that thy lord is of so high prudence  
Bicause of whiche sholde men him reuerence  
That of his worshippe reckith he so lyte  
His ouerest stoppe is nat worth a myte  
As in effecte to him so moot I goo  
It is alle bandy and to toze also  
Why is thy lord so stotyshe I the pray  
And of power is better clothe to beyn  
If that his dede accorde with his speche  
Tel me that and that I the beseeche  
Why quod this yeman wherto aske ye me  
God helpe me so for he shal neuir the  
But I wyl now auowe that I say  
And therfore kepe it secrete I you prey  
He is to wyse in feyth as I beleue  
That is ouir do it wol neuir preue  
And right as clerkes say it is a byce  
Wherfore in that I holde him lewde and nyce  
For whan a man hath ouir grete a wytte  
Ful oft it happith him to mys vse it  
So do my lord and that me greuyth sore  
God it amende I can say nomore  
Therof no force gode yeman quod oure hoost  
Sithen of the connynge of thy lord thou hoost  
Tel how he doth tel on now hardely

## The prologue of the chanons yeman

Sithen that he is so crafty and so slye  
Where duelle ye if it to telle be  
In the subarbes of a toun quod he  
Lurkyng in heryns and in lanys blynde  
Where as these robbers and these theuys be kynde  
Holden theire ferdful pryue residence  
As they that dar nat shewe theire presence  
So fare we if we shal say the sothe  
Now quod oure hoost let me talke tothe  
Why art thou so descoloured in thy face  
Petyr quod he god yeuyth harde grace  
I am so bsd the hote fyre to blowe  
That it hath chaunged my coloure I trowe  
I am nat wont in no myrroure to pryue  
But swynke sore and lerne to multiplie  
We blundryn euil and pouryn in the fyre  
And for alre that we sayle of oure desyre  
For euil we lacke oure conclusioun  
To moche folke we do illusioun  
And borowe golde be it a pounde or two  
Or ten or twelue or many sommes mo  
And make them wene at the lest wey  
That of a pounde we coude make tway  
It is false and ay we haue gode hope  
It for to do and after it we grope  
But that science is so fer bs biforn  
We may nat al though we hadde it sworn  
It ouir take it flytte away so fast  
It wol bs make bettgars at the last  
Whyle this yeman was thus in talkyng  
This chanon drewe him nere and herde al thyng  
Whiche this yeman spake for suspectioun  
O fmenys speche euil hadde this chanon



## The prologue of the chanons yeman

For caton sayth he that tytly is  
Demyth al thyng to be spoke of him y wys  
That was the cause he gan so nyth dra we  
To this yeman to herkyne alle his sa we  
And thus he sayde to his yeman tho  
Holde thou thy peas and speke no mo  
For if thou do thou shalt it dere abyde  
Thou sclaudrest me here in this company  
And eke discoueryst that thou sholdest hyde  
ye quod oure hoost tel on what so betyde  
Of alle this thretynge reche thou nat a myte  
In feyth quod he no more I do but lyte  
And whan this chanon sa we it wolde nat be  
But that this yeman wolde telle his pryuyte  
He fledde a wey for verry sorowe and shame  
A ha quod the yeman here shal ryse a game  
Al that I can anon I wol you tel  
Sithen he is goon the foule fende him quelle  
For neuir hereafter wol I with him mete  
For peny ne for pounde I you behete  
He that me first brought to that game  
Or that he dye sorowe hane he and shame  
For it is ernest to me by my feyth  
That fele I wele what that any man sayth  
And yet for alle my smert and alle my greef  
For al my sorowe laboure and myscheef  
I coude neuir leue it in no wyse  
Now Wold to god my wytte myght suffise  
To telle alle that longith to that arte  
But natheles you wol I tel a parte  
Sithen that my lord is goon I wol nat spare  
Suche thyng as I knowe I wol declare

# The tale of the chanons pema

Here endith the prologue of  
the Chanons pema  
And begynneth his tale



W    Ith this chanon I duelled seyn pere  
      And of his science am neuir the nere  
Al that I hadde I haue lost therby  
And god wote so haue mo than I  
Of clothyng and of othez gode aray  
There as I was wonte to be right freshe and gay  
Now may I were an hofe bpon myn hede  
And where my coloure was bothe white and rede  
Now it is wan and of a ledyn he we  
Who so it vsyth soze shal he rewe  
And of my swynke y blent is myn eye  
So suche auantage it is to multiplie  
That slydyn science hath made me so bare  
That I haue no gode where that euir I fare



## The tale of the channons yeman

And yet I am endettyd so soze therby  
Of golde that I borowed truly  
That whyle I lyue I shal it quyte neuir  
Let euery man beware by me for euir  
What maner man that castith him therto  
If he contynue I holde his thryfte y do  
For helpe me god therby shal he nat wynnne  
But enpeyre his purse and make his wytte thynne  
And whan he through his madnes and his foly  
Hath lost his owne gode through iepardy  
Than he exciteth other men therto  
To lese theire gode as he him self hath do  
For vnto wretches ioye it is and ease  
To haue theire felowes in peyne and disease  
For thus was I onys lernyd of a clerke  
Of that no charge I wol speke of oure werke  
Whan we be there as we shal excersise  
Dure elysshecraft we seme wondre wyse  
Dure termys been so clergypalle and so queynt  
I blowe the fyre tyl my herte feynthe  
What sholde I telle eche propozcion  
Of thynges whiche we worke vpon  
As on fyre or sey vnces may wele be  
Of syluer or some other quantite  
And besy me to telle you the names  
Of orpement brent bones iron squames  
That into powder grounde be ful smalle  
And in an erthen pottle how put is alle  
And salt petyr and also papyre  
Bifore these powders that I speke of here  
And wele y couered with a lampe of glas  
And of moche other thyng whiche that there was  
And of the pottys and glasses enlutyng

## The tale of the chanoys yeman

That of the eyre myght passe oute nothyng  
And of the fyre easi and smert also  
Whiche that was made and of the care and wo  
That we hadde in oure maters sublymyng  
And in amalgamyng and calcenyng  
Of quyespluer cleped mercury crude  
For alle oure slighthes we can nat conclude  
Oure orpement and sublymed mercury  
Oure grounden litarge eke on the persury  
Of eche of them of vnces a certayn  
Nat helpith vs oure labour is in beyng  
And eke oure spirites ascencioun  
Ne oure maters that lyen al fix a doun  
May in oure workyng no thyng auayle  
For lost is alle oure labour and trauayle  
And alle the coost a twenty deuyll wey  
Is lost also whiche we on it ley  
For ther is also ful many a nother thyng  
That is to oure crafte apperteynyng  
Though I by ordre them reherse ne can  
Bicause that I am a lewde man  
yet wol I tel them as they come to mynde  
Though I ne can nat sette them in their kynde  
As boole armonpache beerdettrece bozas  
And sondry vesselles made of erthe and glas  
Oure bynnales and oure descensories  
Violes crossolettes and sublymatorie  
Conturbitees and alembykes eke  
And othez suche dere ynough a lech  
Nat nedith it to reherse them alle  
Waters rubisfyng and boles galle  
Arsenyk sal armonpake and byrmstone  
And herbes eke coude I telle many one



## The tale of the chanoys yeman

As egyptmonyne Valerian and lunar  
And othez suche if that me lyst to tary  
Dure lampes Brynne nyght and day  
To brynge aboute oure craft if that we may  
Dure furnes eke of calcinacioun  
And of waters albisfycacioun  
Unflecyd lyme chalke gleyre of an eye  
Poudres dyuerse asshes dong pyssle and clepe  
Seryd pottes salt petyr byttriote  
And dyuers fyres made of wode and coles  
Sal tartyr alcoyl and sal preparate  
And combuste maters and coagulate  
Cley made with horse dong mannys here and oyle  
Of tartre almyglas berme worde and argyle  
Rosaltaz and othez maters enbisyng  
And eke of oure maters encorpozynge  
And of oure syluer citrynacioun  
Dure sementynge and oure fermentacioun  
Dure ingottes testes and many moo  
I wol you telle as me was taughte also  
The foure spirites and the bodies seyn  
By ordre as I herd my lord neyn  
The first spirite quychesiluer clepyd is  
The secounde ozpement the thridde y wys  
Sal armonyacke and the fourth brymstone  
The bodies seyn loke them there anon  
Sol golde is and luna syluer we threpe  
Mars iron Mercury quychesiluer we clepe  
Saturnus lede and iubitir is tyn  
And Venus copez by my fader kynne  
This cursed craft who wol excercise  
He shalle no gode haue that may suffise  
For alle gode he spended theire aboute

The tale of the chanons pema

Be lese ſhal therof haue I no doute  
Who ſo that lyſtith vnter his ſoly  
Let him come forth and lerne to multiply  
And euery man that hath ought in his cofre  
Let him appere and weye a philoſopher  
Preeſt or chanon or any other wight  
Though he ſytte at his booke day and nyght  
In lernynge of this elyſſhe nyce lore  
Alle is in beyn and parde moche more  
Is to lerne a lewde man this ſubtelte  
Fy ſpeke nat therof it wol nat be  
And can he lettrature or can he none  
As in effecte he ſhal fynde it al one  
For bothe two by my ſaluacioun  
Concluden in multiplicacioun  
Al like wele whan they haue alle y doo  
This is to ſayn they fayle bothe two  
yet forgate I to make reherſayle  
Of watres corosyf and of lymayle  
And of bodies molliſficacioun  
And alſo of theire enduracioun  
Dyles ablacions metalle ſuſible  
To telle you it wolde paſſe any byble  
That owhere is therfore as for the beſt  
Of theſe names now wol I me reſt  
For as I trowe I haue tolde y now  
To reyse a feende al loke he neuir ſo row  
A nay let be the philoſophers ſtoon  
Ellyer we clepe we ſeke faſt echoon  
For hadde we him than were we ſiker y now  
But vnto god of heuyn I make auowe  
For alle oure craft whan we haue alle y do  
And alle oure ſleyghte he wel nat come vs to



## The tale of the chanons yeman

He hath made vs spende moche gode  
For sorowe therof almoost we wepen wode  
But that gode hope crepith in oure herte  
Supposyng euir though we soze smert  
To be releuyd by him afterwarde  
Suche supposyng and hope is sharpe and hazde  
I warne you wele it is to sekyn euir  
That future tyme hath made men disseuiz  
In truste therof alle that euir they hadde  
Yet of that arte they can nat wep sad  
For vnto them it is a bytter swete  
So semyth it for ne had they but a shete  
Whiche that myght wrappe them in a nyght  
And a bratte to walken in by day lyght  
They wolde it selle and spende it in this craft  
They can nat stynt tyl no thyng be last  
And euir more where that they goon  
Men may them kenne by smelle of brymston  
For al the worlde they stynke as a gote  
Theire sauoure is so rammyshe and so hote  
That though a man a myle from them be  
The sauoure wyl enfecte him trustith me  
So thus by smellyng and thredebare aray  
Is that men lyst these folke knowe they may  
And if a man wol aske them pryuelly  
Why they be clothed so vnthriftely  
Right anone they wol roune in his ere  
And say if that they aspyed were  
Men wolde them sle bicause of theire science  
So thus these folke betrayen innocence  
Pas ouir this I my tale vnto  
Or that the potte be on the fyre y do  
And metalles a certayn quantite

The tale of the chanons yeman

My lordes them temprith and no man but he  
Now is he goon I dar say boldly  
For as men say he can do craftely  
Algate I wote wele he hath suche a name  
And yet ful ofte he rynneth in the blame  
And wote ye how ful ofte it farith so  
The pot to brekith and fare wele al is do  
The metalles been of so grete byolence  
Dure walles may nat make them resistance  
But if they were wrought of lyme and stone  
They perse so and through the walle they gone  
And som of them synke down in the grounde  
Thus haue we lost by tyme many a pounde  
And som ar scatred al the floore aboute  
Some lepyth in the roof withouten doute  
Though that the feende in oure sight him nat shewe  
I trow that he with vs be that ilke shewe  
In helle where he is lord and syre  
Ne is ther more wo ne rancor ne pre  
Whan that oure pote is broken as I haue sayd  
Euery man chyt and holdith him euyl appayed  
Some sayde it was of the fyre makynge  
Some sayd nay it was of the blowynge  
Than was I aferde for that was myn office  
Stra we quod the thridde ye be lewde and nyce  
It was nat tempryd as it ought to be  
Nay quod the fourthe stynte and herkyne me  
Bicause oure fyre was nat made of beche  
That is the cause and other none sitheche  
I can nat telle where on it was alonge  
But wele I wote grete stryf is vs a mony  
What quod my lordes ther is no more to doon  
Of these parzelles I wol be ware effone



## The tale of the chaunons yeman

I am right syker that the potte was crased  
Be as be may be ye nat amasyd  
As vsage is let swepe the floze swythe  
Plucke bp youre hertes and be glade and blythe  
The mulloke on an hepe swepyd was  
And on the flooze cast a canuas  
And alle the mulloke in a syde y throwe  
And sifyd and pyched many a throwe  
Parde quod one somwhat of our metalle  
yet is ther here though we haue nat alle  
And though this thyng myshapped hath as now  
Another tyme it may be wele ynow  
We must put oure gode in auenture  
A marchaunt parde may nat ay endure  
Trustith me wele in his prosperite  
Somytyme his godes been drenchyd in the see  
And somtyme it comyth sauf vntolonde  
Peas quod my lorde the nexte tyme I wol fonde  
To bryngt oure craste al in an othez plyte  
And but I do fires lete me haue the wyte  
Ther was a defaute in somwhat wele I wote  
A nother sayde the fyre was ouir hote  
But be it hote oz colde I dar say this  
That we conclud euir more amys  
We fayle alwey of that we wolde haue  
And in oure madnes euir more we raue  
And whan we be to gydder euerichone  
Euery man semyth as wyse as salamon  
But alle thyng whiche that shyneth as golde  
It is nat golde as I haue herde tolde  
Ne euery appyl that is fayre at eye  
Nys nat gode what so we clappe oz crye  
Right so it farith amonges vs

## The tale of the chanons yeman

He that semyth wysest By swete Iesus  
Is moost foole whan it comyth to the preef  
And he that semyth trewest is a theef  
That shal ye knowe or that I from you wende  
Be that my tale be tolde vnto an ende  
There was a chanon of religioun  
Amonges vs wolde infecte al a toun  
Though it were as grete as was ny nyue  
Rome Alisaundre troye or other thre  
His slighthes and his infynpte falsenesse  
Ne coude noman write as I gesse  
Though that he myght lyue a thousand yere  
In alle the worlde of falsnesse nys his pere  
For in his termys he wyl him so wynde  
And speke his wordes in so slighly kynde  
Whan he comen shal with ony wight  
That he wol make him dote anon right  
But it a feende be as him self is  
ful many a man hath he begyled or this  
And wol if that helyue may a while  
And yet men ryde or go many a myle  
Him for to seke and haue his acqweyntaunce  
Nat knowyng of his fals gouernaunce  
And if ye lyst to geue me audience  
I wol it tel here in youre presence  
But worshipful chanons religious  
Ne demeth nat that I sclaunder youre house  
Al though my tale of a chanon be  
Of euery ordre som shewe is parde  
As god forbede that al a company  
Shulde rewe a synnguler mannys fely  
To sclaunder you it is no thyng myn entent  
But to correcte that is mys went



The tale of the chanons yeman

This tale was nat only tolde for you  
But eke for other mo ye wote wele how  
That amonges cristes apostelles twelue  
There nas no traytoure but iudas him selue  
Than why sholde we remenaunt haue a blame  
That gyltles were by you I say the same  
Saue only this if ye wol herken me  
If any Judas in youre couent be  
Remeuyth him betymes I you rede  
If shame or losse may cause any drede  
And be nothyng displeased I you pray  
But in this caas herken what I say

i In London was a preest Annuelere

That therin hadde duelt many a pere  
Whiche was so plesaunt and so seruy sable  
Vnto the wyf where as he went to table  
That she wolde suffre him no thyng to pay  
For borde ne clothynge went he neuiz so gay  
And spendynge spluez hadde he right pnowe  
Therof no force in plesaunce went his plowe  
But for to telle you forth of this chanon  
That brought this preest to confusion  
This fals chanon cam vpon a day  
Vnto the preestes chambre where he lay  
Besekynge him to lene him a certayn  
Of golde and he wolde quyte him agayn  
Lene me a marke quod he but daies thre  
At my day I wol sauns fayle quyte it the  
And if so be thou fynde me than fals  
Another day hang me by the hals  
This preest him toke a marke and that as swythe  
And this chanon him thanked of tspythe  
And toke his leue and went forth his wey

## The tale of the chanoys pemañ

And at the thridde day Broughte his money  
And to this preest he toke his golde agayn  
Wherof this preest was Wondre glade and fayne  
Certis quod he no thyng annoyeth me  
To lene a man a noble two or thre  
Or what thyng were in my possession  
Whan he is so true of condicioun  
That in no wyse breke he wol his day  
To such a man I can nat say nay  
What quod this chanon sholde I be vntrue  
Nay that were a thyng fallen of newe  
Trowth is a thyng that I wol euir kepe  
Vnto that day in whiche I shal crepe  
Into my graue or elles criste forbede  
Beleuyth this as spheer as the crede  
God I thanke and in gode tyme be it sayde  
That ther nas neuir man yet euyl payde  
For golde ne siuer that he me lent  
Ne neuir falshe in myn herte I ment  
And sir quod he now of my pryuyte  
Sithen ye so godeliche haue been to me  
And kyndith to me so grete gentylnesse  
Somwhat to quyte with youre kyndnesse  
I wol you shewe if that ye lyst here  
I wol you teche plener the matere  
How I can worke in philosophye  
Take gode hede ye shal wele se at eye  
That I wol a maystrye do or I go  
ye sir quod the preest and wol ye so  
Mary therof I pray you hartely  
At youre comaundment sir truly  
Quod the chanon and elles criste forbede  
To how this theef coude his seruice bede



## The tale of the chanons yeman

Ful soth it is that suche profered seruise  
Stynketh as wytnessith the olde wyse  
And that right sone I wol it verify  
In this chanon rotte of alle trechery  
That euirmore delite hath and gladnesse  
Suche feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse  
How cristes people he may to mychief bryng  
God kepe vs from his false dysymlyng  
Nought wist this preest with whom that he delte  
Me of his harme comyng no thyng he felte  
O sely preest o sely innocent  
With couetyse anone thou shalt be blent  
O graceles ful blynde is thy conceyte  
No thyng art thou ware of his disceyte  
Whiche that this fox shapen hath to the  
His wyles his wrenches thou mayst nat see  
Wherfore to go to the conclusioun  
That referyth to thy confusioun  
Unhappy man anon I wol me hys  
To tell thy vnwytt and thy foly  
Andeke the falsenesse of that othez wretche  
As ferforth as my conyng wyl stretch  
This chanon was my lord ye wol wene  
Sir hoost in feyth and by heuens quene  
It was a nothez chanon and nat he  
That can an hundred folde more subtelte  
He hath betrayed folke many a tyme  
Of his falsenesse it dullith me to ryme  
Euir whan I speke of his falsehede  
For shame of him my chekes weyen rede  
Algates they begynne for to glowe  
For redenesse haue I none right wele I knowe  
In my bysage for fumes dyuerse

## The tale of the chanons yeman

Of metalle whiche ye haue herde me reherce  
Consumed and wastyd hath my redenesse  
Now takith hede of this chanons cursidnesse  
Sir quod he to the preest let your man gone  
For quycsiluer that we hadde it anone  
And let him bryng vnces t wo or thre  
And whan he comyth as fast ye shal se  
A wondre thyng whiche ye sa we neuir or this  
Sir quod the preest it shal be do y wys  
He hadde his seruaunt fetch he him this thyng  
And he al redy was at his byddyngh  
And went him forth and cam anone agayn  
With this quycsiluer shortly for to seyn  
And toke the vnces thre to the chanon  
And he them leyde wele and fapre adoun  
And hadde the seruaunt coles for to bryng  
That he anon myght go to his workyng  
The coles right anon were y sette  
And this chanon toke oute a crosselet  
Of his bosom and she wde it to the preest  
This instrument quod he whiche that thou seest  
Take in thy honde and put thy self therin  
Of this quycsiluer an vnce and begynne  
In the name of crist to wey a philosophes  
Ther be ful fewe whiche I wolde it profes  
To shewe them thus moche of my science  
For here shal ye se by experience  
That this quycsiluer I wol mortify  
Right in youre sight anon withouten lye  
And make it as gode syluer and as fyne  
As there is any in youre purse or myn  
Or elles where and make it mallicable  
And elles holde me fals and vnstable



## The tale of the chanons yeman

Amonges folke for euir to appere  
I haue a pou dre that cost me dere  
Shal make al gode for it is cause of alle  
My connyng whiche I you she we shal  
Wopdeth poure man and let him be withoute  
And shytt the dore whyle we be there aboute  
Dure pryuate that noman bs a spye  
Whiles that we worke in this philosophy  
Al as he hadde fulfyllled was in dede  
This ilke seruaunt anon oute pede  
And his mayster shytt the dore anon  
And to theire laboure spedely they goon  
This preest at this cursed chanons byddynge  
Vpon the fyre right anon set this thyng  
And blewe the fyre and besped him fulle faste  
And this chanon into the crosselet cast  
A pou dre nat I neuir wherof it was  
y made of chalke of erthe or of glas  
Or som what elles was nat worth a flye  
To blynde with this preest and hadde him hys  
The coles for to couche alle aboue  
For in tokenyng that I the loue  
Quod this chanon. thyn hondes two  
Shal werke al thyng that here shal be do  
Gramercy quod this preest and was right glade  
And couched the coles as the chanon bade  
And while he besp was. this feendly wretche  
This false chanon the foule feende him fetchte  
Dute of his bosom toke a bechyn cole  
In whiche ful subtelly was made an hole  
And therin was put of syluer lympayle  
An vnse and stoppyd was withouten fayle  
The hole with wey to hepe the lympayle in

## The tale of the chanons yeman

And vnderstonde th that this false gyn  
Was nat made there but it was made before  
And othez thynges that I you telle shal more  
Hereafter whiche he with him brought  
Or he cam there him to begyle he thought  
And so he dyd or that they yede at Wynne  
Tyl he hadde ternyd him he coude nat tynne  
It dullyth me whan that I of him speke  
Of his falsehede I wolde I me wreke  
If I wist how but he is here and there  
He is so variaunt he abyde th no where  
But takith hede sires for goddes loue  
He toke his cole of whiche I spake aboue  
And in his honde he bare it pruely  
And whiles this preeft couched besily  
The coles as I you tolde or this  
This chanon sayd frende ye doo amys  
This is nat couchyd as it ought to be  
But sone I shalle amende it quod he  
Now let me medle ther with but a while  
For I haue of you pyte by seint gyle  
Ye be right hote I se how ye swete  
Haue here a clothe and wype a wey the wete  
And whiles the preeft wypped his face  
This chanon toke his cole with soz grace  
And leyde it aboue vpon the mydwarde  
Of the crosselet and blewe wele after ward  
Tyl that the coles gan fast to brenne  
Now yeue vs drynke quod the chanon thenne  
As swythe al shal be wele I vnder take  
Syt we doun and let vs mery make  
And whan this chanon his bechyn cole  
Hadde broughte and the lymayle oute of the hole



The tale of the chanoys yeman

Into the crosselet it fyl anon down  
And so it must nedes by reason  
Sithen it so euyn aboue couched was  
But therof wylt the preest nothyng allas  
He demyd alle the coles lyche gode  
For of the sight he nothyng understode  
And whan this alhamyltre sawe his tyme  
Kyse by sir preest he sayde and stound by me  
And for I wote wele ingot haue ye none  
Go walketh forth and bryngeth a chark stone  
For I wol make of it the same shappe  
That an ingot is if it may happe  
And brynge eke with you a bolle or a pan  
Ful of water and ye shalle wile se thanne  
How that oure besynesse shal turyue and preue  
And for ye shal haue me in no mysbeleue  
Ne wrong concept of me in youre absence  
I wol nat be oute of your presence  
But go with you and come with you agayn  
The chambre dore shortly for to seyn  
They opened and shyttre and went theire wey  
And forth with them they toke the key  
And cam ayen withoute any delay  
What shold I tary alle the long day  
He toke the chalke and shope it in a wyse  
Of an ingotte as I shal you deuyse  
I say he toke oute of his owne sleue  
A teyn of siluer euyl mot he cheue  
Whiche that ne was but an vnce of wythe  
And takith hede now of this cursed sight  
He shope his ingot in length and in brede  
Of this teyn withouten any drede  
So slightly that the preest it nat aspyed

## The tale of the chanons yeman

And in his sleue agayn he gan it hyde  
And from the fyre he toke bp the matere  
And in the ingot he put it With mery there  
And into the wateressel he it cast  
Whan that himlyst and had the preest as fast  
Done what there is put in thyn honde and grope  
Thou shalt fynde there syluer as I hope  
What deuyt of helle sholde it ellis be  
Shaupng of siluer syluer is sir parde  
He put his honde in and toke bp a teryn  
Of syluer fyne and glade in euerp beyne  
Blythe was this preest whan he sawe it was so  
Goddess blyssyng and his moders also  
And alle halowes haue ye sir chanon  
Sayde this preest and I her malisoun  
But and ye bouche sauf to teche it me  
This noble crafte and this subtelte  
I wol be poure man in alle that euer I may  
Quod this chanon yet wol I make assay  
The secounde tyme that ye may take hede  
And be experte in this at poure nede  
Another day assay in myn absence  
This disciplyne and this crafty science  
Pet take another vnce quod he tho  
Of quyncsiluer withoute wordes mo  
And do therwith as ye haue do or this  
With that othez whiche that now syluer is  
The preest him bespeth al that euir he can  
To do as this chanon this cursed man  
Comaunded him and fast blewe the fyre  
For to come to the effecte of his desyre  
And this chanon right in this meane whyle  
Al redy was the preest for to begyle



## The tale of the chanons yeman

And for countenaunce in his honde bare  
An holowe styche take hepe and be ware  
In the ende of whiche an vnce and more  
Of syluer lymayle put as sayde is bifoze  
Was in his cole and stoppyd with wey wele  
For to hepe in his lymayle euery dele  
And while the preest was in his besynesse  
This chanon with his styche gan it dresse  
To him anon and his poudre caste in  
As he dyderst. the deuyl oute of his shyn  
Him turne I pray to god for his falsehede  
For he was euir false in thoughte and dede  
And with his styche aboue his crosselet  
That was ordeyned with that false get  
He steryd the coles tyl al relente beganne  
The wey apenst the fyre as euery man  
But it a fool be wote wele it must nede  
And alle that in the styche was oute pede  
And in the crosselet hastely fel  
Now gode fires what wol ye bet than wel  
Whan that this preest was thus betyled agayn  
Supposyng nought but trouthe soth to sayn  
He was so glade I can nat expresse  
In no maner his myrthe and his gladnesse  
And to the chanon he profred eft sone  
Body and gode. ye quod the chanon anon  
Though I be poure crafty thou shalt me fynde  
I warne the wele yet is ther more behynde  
Is there any coppe herin quod he  
Ye quod the preest sir I trowe ther be  
Elles go bye vs som and that as swythe  
Now gode sir go forth thy wey and hythe  
He went his wey and with his coppe cam

## The tale of the chanons yeman

And the chanon in his honde it nam  
And of that copre he weyd oute an vnce  
Alle to symple is my tonge to pronounce  
As to mynistre of my wytte the doubtenesse  
Of this chanon rote of alle cursydnesse  
He semyd frendly to them that knewe him nought  
But he was feendly bothe in herte and thought  
It werpeth me to telle of his falsenesse  
And natheles yet wol I it expresse  
To that entent that men may be ware therby  
And for none other cause truly  
He put this vnce of copers in his crosselet  
And on the fyre as swythe he it set  
And cast in poudre and made the preest to blowe  
And in his workyng for to stoupe lowe  
As he dydere and al was but a iape  
Right as him lyst the preest he made his ape  
And after in the ingot he it cast  
And in the panne put it at the last  
Of water and in he put his owne hande  
And in his sleue as ye bifore hande  
Herd me tel and he hadde of siluer a tyn  
He slyghly toke it oute this cursed tyn  
On wetynge of the preest of this false crafte  
And in the pannes botom he it last  
And in the water rombleth to and fro  
And wondre pryuely he toke by also  
The coper tyn nat knowyng the preest  
And hyd it and him hent by the brest  
And to him spake and thus he sayd in game  
Stoupeth adoun by god ye be to blame  
Helpe me now as I dyd you while ere  
Put in youre hond and lokith what is there



## The tale of the chanons yeman


This preest toke by this siluer teph anoon  
And than sayd the chanon let vs goon  
With these thre tynes whiche that we haue wrought  
To som goldsmyth to loke if they be oughthe  
For by my feyth I nolde for myn hode  
But if they were syluer fyne and good  
And that as swythe preuyd it shalbe  
Vnto the goldsmyth with these tynes thre  
They went and put these tynes in assay  
To fyre and hamez myght no man say nay  
But that they were as them oughthe to be  
This sotty preest who was gladder than he  
Was neuiz byrde gladder agenst the day  
Ne nyghtyngale in the season of may  
Was neuiz noon that best lyst to syng  
Ne lady lusty in carolynge  
Or for to speke of loue or womanhede  
Ne knyght in armes to done an hardy dede  
To stonde in grace of his lady dere  
Than hadde this preest this sozycraft to lere  
And to the chanon thus spake he and seyde  
That for the loue of god that for vs al deyde  
And as I may deserue it vnto you  
What shal this receyte coste tel me now  
By oure lady quod this chanon it is dere  
I warne you wele that saue I and a freze  
In Englonde can no man it make  
No force quod he now sir for goddes sake  
What shal I pay telle me I you pray  
I wys quod he it is ful dere I say  
Sir at one worde if ye lyst it to haue  
ye shalle pay forty ponde so god me saue  
And nere the frendship that ye dyd or this

## The tale of the chanons yeman

To me sholde ye paye nomore y wys  
This preest the summe of fourty pounde anon  
Of nobles fet and toke them euerichoon  
To this chanon for his ilke recepte  
Alle his workyng was but fraude and discepte  
Sir preest he sayd I hepe to haue no losse  
Of my crafte for I wol hepe it close  
And as ye loue me hepe ye it secre  
For if men knowe alle my subtelte  
By god they wolde haue so grete enuye  
To me bicause of my philophye  
I sholde be dede ther were none othez wey  
God forbode quod the preest what ye say  
yet hadde I lyuez spende al the gode  
Whiche that I haue or elles were I wode  
Than that ye shulde falle in suche a myschief  
For poure gode wyll sir haue ye right gode preef  
Quod this chanon and fare wele graunt mercy  
And went his way and neuiz the preest him se  
After that day. and whan this preest sholde  
Make assay at suche tyme as he wolde  
Of this recepte fare wele it wol nat be  
So thus beiaped and begyled was he  
Thus makith he his introduction  
To bryng folke to theire distruction  
Considreth sires how that in eche estate  
Betwyte men and golde ther is debate  
So ferforth that vnnethes is there none  
This multipliynge blyndeth so many one  
That in gode feyth I trowe thad it be  
The cause gretest of suche scarsite  
These philosophers speken so mystely  
In this crafte that men can nat come therby



## The tale of the chanons yeman

For any wytte that men may haue now a daies  
They may wele chatern as doon Japes   
And in theire termys settyn their lust and peyn  
But to theire purpos shal they neuir atteyn  
A man may lightly lerne if he haue ought  
To multiply. and bryng his gode to nought  
Po whiche a lucre is in this worthy game  
A manns myrthe it wol turne vnto grame  
And empte also grete and heuy purses  
And maken folke for to purchase curses  
Of them that haue theire gode to them lent  
O fy for shame tho that haue be bent  
Allas can they nat fle the fyres hete  
ye that it vse I rede that ye it lete  
Best that ye lese al for bette than neuir is late  
Neuir to thryue were to long a date  
Though ye prolle euir neuir shal ye it fynde  
ye be as bolde as it baperd the blynde  
That blundreth forth and paret castith none  
He is as bolde to rynne agaynst a stone  
As for to go besides in the wey  
So fare ye that multiply I sey  
If that youre eyen can nat se a right  
Loke that youre myndelache nat his sight  
For though that ye loke right brode and stare  
ye shal wyne neuir of that chaffare  
But waste alle that ye may rappe and renne  
Withdraue the fyre lest it to fast Brenne  
Medlith no more with that arte I mene  
For if ye do your thriste is gone fulclene  
And right as swythe I wyl you telle here  
What philosophers dyd in this matere  
Po thus sayth Arnolde of the newe toum

## The tale of the chanoys yeman

As his rosary makith mencion  
He sayth right thus withouten any lye  
Ther may no man mercury mortefy  
But if it be with his brothers knowltyng  
To how that he whiche first sayd this thyng  
Of philosophers fadre was hermes  
He sayth how that the dragon doutles  
Ne dieth nat but if that he be slayn  
With his brother and that is for to seyn  
By the dragon Mercury and none other  
He vnderstondeþ and brymstone be his brother  
That oute of sol and luna were y drawe  
And therfore sayde he take hede to my sawe  
Let no man besy him this arte for to seche  
But he the entencion and the speche  
Of philosophers vnderstonde can  
And if he do he is a lewde man  
For this science and this honnyng sayd he  
Is of the secrete of secretes parde  
Also ther was a disciple of plato  
That on a tyme sayde his mayster to  
As his boke semoz wolbere wytnes  
And this was his demaunde in sothfastnes  
Tel me the name of that pryue stone  
And plato aunswerde vnto him anone  
Take the stone that Thitanes men name  
Whiche is that quod he magnacia is the same  
Sayde plato ye sir is it thus  
This is ignotum per ignocius  
What is magnacia gode sir I you pray  
It is a water that is made I say  
Of elementes foure quod plato  
Tel me the rote gode sir quod he tho



## The tale of the chanons yeman

Of that water if it be poure wyllle  
Nay nay quod plato certeyn that I wyllle  
The philosophers were sworne euerychone  
That they sholde discouer it to none  
Ne in no boke it wryte in no manere  
For vnto god it is so leef and dere  
For he wol nat that it discoueryd be  
But where it lyketh to his depte  
Man to enspire and eke vnto defende  
Whan that him lyketh so this is the ende  
Than conclude I thus sithen that god of heuyn  
Ne wol nat the philosophers neuyn  
How that a man shal come vnto this stone  
I rede as for the best let it gone  
For who so makith god his aduersary  
As for to worke any thyng in contrary  
Of his wyllle. neuir shal he thryue  
Though that he multiplie terme of his lyue  
And there a poynte for endydis my tale  
God sende euery gode man bote of his bale  
Here endith the tale of the chanons yeman



# The tale of the doctoure of phisyke

Here begynneth the tale  
of the doctoure of phisyke

t Her Was as tellith titus liupus  
A knyght that cleppd was virgynus  
Fulfilled of honoure and of worthynes  
And stronge of frendes and of richesse  
A doughter had this knyght by his wyf  
No children hadde he mo in al his lyf  
Fayre was this mayde of excellent beaute  
Aboue euery wight that men myght se  
For nature hath with souerayn diligence  
Foumed her in so grete excellence  
As though she wolde say lo I nature  
Thus can I foume and peynte a creature  
Whan that me lyst who can me contrefete  
Pygmaleon nat though he forge and bete  
Or graue or peynte for I dar wele sayn  
Apelles zanzis sholde worche in beyn  
To graue or peynte or forge or bete  
If they presumed me to countrefete  
For he that is the fourmoure principalle  
Hath made me his bycare generalle  
To foume and peynte erthly creatures  
Right as me lyst for alle thyng in my cure is  
Vndre the mone that may wane and waxe  
And for my werke nothyng wol I axe  
My lord and I be fully of accorde  
I made her to the worshippe of my lord  
So do I alle myn other creatures  
Of what coloures they be or what figures  
Thus semyth me that nature wolde say  
This mayde was of tuelue yere age and tway



## The tale of the doctoure of phisyc

In Whiche that nature had suche deelyte  
For right as he can pepnte a lylly white  
And rody as a rose with suche pepnture  
She pepnted hath this noble creature  
Or she was born vpon her lymes fre  
Where as by right suche coloures sholde be  
And phebus dyde had his dresses grete  
Pyke to the stremys of his burnyng hete  
And if that excellent was her beaute  
A thousand folde more vertuons was she  
In her ne lackith no condicioun  
That is to pryse as by discrecioun  
As wele in body as in goost chaste was she  
For whiche she flored in birtynite  
With alle humylite and abstinence  
With alle atemperaunce and patience  
With mesure eke and beryng of aray  
Discrete she was in aunswering allwey  
She was as wyse as pallas dare I seyn  
Her facunde eke ful womanly and pleynt  
None countrefetyd termes hadde she  
To seme wyse but after her degre  
She spake and alle her wordes more and lesse  
Sownyng in vertue and in gentylnesse  
Shamefast she was in maydens shamefastnesse  
Constant in herte and euir in besynesse  
To dryue her oute of ydle slothardye  
Vacus hadde of her mouthe no maistrye  
For wyne and yowthe doth venus encrese  
As men in fyre wol cast oyle or grece  
And of her owne vertue vncostreynded  
She hath ful ofte tymes her seke feyned  
For that she wolde fle the company

## The tale of the doctoure of phispyke

Where lythely was to treten of foly  
As is at festes reuelles and daunces  
That been occasions of daliaunces  
Suche thynges make children for to be  
To sone rype and bolde as men may se  
Whiche is ful parlous and hath been yore  
For alle to sone may she lerne the lore  
Of boldnesse whan she is wexen a wyf  
And ye mastresses in youre olde lyf  
That lordes daughters haue in gouernaunce  
Ne takith of my wordes no displeaunce  
Thynke that ye been set in gouernynge  
Of lordes daughters only for two thynges  
Ether for to haue kept youre honesty  
Or elles ye haue fallen in freelte  
And knowe wele ynough the olde daunce  
And haue for sake fully myschaunce  
For euir more, therfore for cristes sake  
To teche them vertue loke that ye nat slake  
A theef of benysoun that hath forlast  
His licouresnesse and his olde crafte  
Can kepe a forest best of any man  
Now kepe them wele for and ye wol ye can  
Potheth wele to no byce that ye assent  
Best ye dampned be for youre euyl entent  
For who so doth a traytoure is certayn  
And takith hede of that I shalle seyn  
Of alle treason souerayn pestilence  
Is whan a wight betrayeth innocence  
Ye faders and ye moders eke also  
Though ye haue children be it one or mo  
Your is the charge of alle theire surueyaunce  
Whiles they been vndre youre gouernaunce



## The tale of the doctoure of phisyke

Beware if by ensamples of your lyuynge  
Or by youre negligence in chastyng  
That they ne peryshe for I dare wile sey  
If that they do ye shal it dere abyde  
Vndre a shipherde soft and negligent  
The wolfe hath many a shepe and lambe to rent  
Suffiseth ensamples ynough as here  
For I must turne aye to my matere  
This mayde of which I telle expresse  
She kept her self she nedyd no maystresse  
For in her lyuynge maydens myght rede  
As in a booke euery gode word in dede  
That longith to a mayde vertuous  
She was so prudent and so bounteous  
For whiche the fame oute sprong on euery syde  
Bothe of her bounte and of her beaute wyde  
That through the londe they pryse her echone  
That loued vertue saue enuy alone  
That soze is of othere mennys wele  
And glade is of his sorowe and vnhale  
This doctoure makith this descripcion  
This mayde on a day went to the toun  
Towarde the temple with her modre dere  
As is of yong maydens the manere  
Now was there a iustice in the toun  
That gouernoure was of that regioun  
And so besyl this iuge his eyen cast  
Vpon this mayde aysyng her ful fast  
As she cam forth by there the iuge stode  
Anone his herte chaunged and his mode  
So was he caught with beaute of this mayde  
And to him self ful pryuelly he sayde  
This mayde shalbe myn for any man

Anone the feende into his herte ran  
 And taughte him sodenly by what sligght  
 The mayden to his purpos wynnne he myght  
 For certis by no force ne by no mede  
 Him thoughte he was nat able for to spede  
 For she was stronge of frendes and eke she  
 Confermyd was in suche souerayn beaute  
 That wele he wist he myght her nat wynnne  
 As for to make her with her body to synne  
 For whiche with grete deliberacioun  
 He sent after a chorle was in the toun  
 The whiche he knewe ful subtil and ful bolde  
 This iuge vnto this chorle his tale hath tolde  
 In secrete wyse and made him to assure  
 He sholde telle it to no creature  
 And if he dyd he sholde lese his hede  
 Whan assentyd was this cursed dede  
 Glade was the iuge and made glade there  
 And paue him yestes precious and dere  
 Whan shapen was al this conspiracy  
 From poynte to poynte how that his lychery  
 Parfourmed shold be ful subtilly  
 As ye shalle here it after alle openly  
 Some goth this chorle that hight claudyus  
 This false iuge that hight Appius  
 So was his name for it is no fabbe  
 But knowen for an historpal thyng notable  
 The sentence of it soth is oute of doute  
 This false iuge goth now fast aboute  
 To hasten his delyte alle that he may  
 And so besyl sone after on a day  
 This false iuge as tellith vs the story  
 As he was wont sat in his consistory



## The tale of the doctoure of phispyke

And paue his domes vpon sondry caas  
This false chorle cam forth a ful grete paas  
And sayd lord if it be youre Wyllle  
As doth me right vpon my pytous Bylle  
In whiche I pleyne vpon Virgynus  
And if he wol say it is nat thus  
I Wyl preue it and fynde gode Wytnesse  
That soth is that my Bylle wol expresse  
The iuge aunswerd of this in his absence  
I may nat yeue diffynpte sentence  
Lette do calle him and I wol gladly here  
Thou shalt haue right and no wrong here  
Virgynus cam to here the iustice Wyllle  
And right anone was redde this cursed Bylle  
The sentence was therof as ye shal here  
To you my lord Apprys so dere  
She with youre poure seruaunt Claudius  
How that a knyght callyd Virgynus  
Apenst the lawe and apenst alle equityte  
Holdith expresse apenst the Wyl of me  
My seruaunt. whiche that is my thralle by right  
Whiche from myn house was stolen on a nyght  
Whiles she was fulle yong I wol it preue  
By Wytnes lord so that ye nat greue  
She nys nat his doughter what so he say  
Wherfore my lorde iustice I you pray  
yelde me my thralle if it be youre Wyllle  
So this was alle the sentence of this Bylle  
Virgynus gan vpon the chorle beholde  
But hastely or he his tale tolde  
He wolde a defendyd it as sholde a knyght  
And by Wytnesse of many a trewe wight  
That alle was false that sayd his aduersary  
Rr m

The tale of the doctoure of phispyke

This cursed iuge wolde no lenger tarp  
Ne here a worde more of birgynus  
But paue his iugement and sayde thus  
I deme anone this chorle his seruant haue  
Thou shalt no lengere in thy house her saue  
Go sette her forth and put her in oure warde  
This chorle shal haue his thralle thus I a warde  
And whan this worthy knyght birgynus  
Through sentence of the iuge Appius  
Must by force his dere doughter yeurn  
Vnto the iuge in lychery to lyuen  
He goth him home and set him in his halle  
And lete anone his dere doughter calle  
And with a face ded as a shes colde  
Vpon her humble face he gan beholde  
With faders pyte styckyngh through his herte  
Al wol he nat from his purpos conuerte  
Doughter quod he virginea by the name  
Ther been two weyes othez deth or shame  
That thou must suffre allas that I was bore  
For neuir thou deseruyt wherfore  
To dye with a swerde or with a knyf  
O dere doughter whiche that alle my lyf  
I haue fostryd by with suche plesauce  
That thou ne were oute of my remembraunce  
O doughter whiche that my last wo  
And in my lyf my last ioy also  
O gemme of chastite in pacience  
Take thou thy deth for this is my sentence  
For loue and nat for hate thou must be dede  
My pytous honde must smyte of thy hede  
Allas that euir Appius the sey  
Thus hath he iuged the to day



## The tale of the doctoure of phispyke

And tolde her al the cas as ye bifore  
Haue herd it nedith to telle it no more  
In mercy dere fadre quod the mayde  
And with that worde she bothe her armes leyde  
Aboute his necke as she was wont to do  
The terps brast out of her eyen two  
And sayd gode fadre shal I dye  
Is ther no grace is ther no remedy  
May certis dere doughter myn quod he  
Than yeue me leue fader myn quod she  
My deth to compleyne a lytel space  
For parde I septe paue his doughter grace  
For to compleyne or he her slow allas  
And god it wote nothyng was her trespas  
But that she ran her fader for to se  
To welcome him with grete solempnite  
And with that worde she fyl a swoune anoon  
And after whan her swounyng was agone  
She ryseth vp and to her fader sayde  
Blyssed be god that I shalle dye a mayde  
Yet me my deth or that I haue a shame  
Doth with youre childe youre wyllle a goddes name  
And with that word she prayeth ful ofte  
That with his swerde he sholde smyte softe  
And with that worde a swoun doune she fyl  
Her fader with a soroufulle herte and wyllle  
Her hede of smote and by the top it hent  
And to the iuge he paue it in present  
As he sat yet in dome in in consistory  
Whan that the iuge it saue as sayth the story  
He badde take him and hange him also fast  
But right anone alle the people in thraste  
To saue the knyght for routhe and for pyte  
hh im

## The tale of the doctoure of phisike

For knowen was the fals iniquyte  
The people anon hadde suspecte in this thyng  
By maner of this chorles chalentyng  
That it was by assent of Appius  
They wist wele that he was lecherous  
Forthwith vnto this appius they gone  
And cast him in pryson and that anone  
Where as he slow him self and claudys  
That seruaunt was vnto this Appius  
Was demyd for to be hanged vpon a tre  
But beryng of his grete pyte  
So prayed for him that he was exiled  
And elles certis hadde he be begyled  
The remenaunt were honged both more and lesse  
That consentyd were to this cursednesse  
Here may ye se how synne hath his meryte  
Be ware for no man wote how god wol smyte  
In no degre ne in no maner wyse  
The worme of conscience may ynough agtryse  
Of wyched lyf though it so pryue be  
That no man wote of but god and he  
Whether that he be lewde man or leryd  
He noot how sone he may be aferyd  
Therefore I rede you this counceyl take  
For sake synne or synne you forsake

Here endith the phisiciens tale  
And begynneth the wordes of the hoost

O Dre hoost gan swere as he were wode  
Harow quod he by nayles and by blode  
This was a fals theef a cursed iustise  
As shamefulle deth as herte can deuyse



## The prologue of the Pardoner

Come to this fals iuges and theire aduocates  
Allas this sely mayde is slayn alas  
Allas to dere aboughte she her beaute  
Wherfore I say that alle men may se  
That pestes of fortune and of nature  
Been cause of deth of many a creature  
Her beaute was her deth I dar wele seyn  
Allas so pytously as she was slayn  
But herof wol I nat procede as now  
Men haue ful ofte more harme than prow  
But truly myn owne mayster dere  
This is a pytous tale for to here  
But menirthelesse passe ouir is no force  
I pray to god so saue thy gentyl corps  
And thy brynales and thy iourdeyns  
Thyn ppocras and eke thy galiens  
And euery boyst fulle of lectuary  
God blisse them al and oure lady seint mary  
So moot I the thou art a proppz man  
And lyke a prelate by seint danyan  
Thou hast spoke ynough I can nat sey in terme  
But wele I wote thou makyst my herte toerne  
That I almoost haue caught a cardpacle  
By corpus dominus but if I haue trpacle  
Or elles a draughte of corny moysty ale  
Or but I here anon a mery tale  
My herte is lost for pyte of this mayde  
Thou belamy thou John pardonere he sayd  
Tel vs som myrthes or iapes right anoon  
It shalbe do he sayde by seint Runyon  
But first quod he here at this ale stake  
I wol bothe drynke and ete of a cake  
But right anoon these gentylles began to cry

## The prologue of the Pardoner

May let him telle vs of no rebaudrye  
Tel vs som moralle thyng that we may lere  
Som wyt and than wol we gladly here  
I graunte ywys quod he but I must thynke  
Vpon som honest thyng whyles that I drynke

Here endith the wordes of the hoost  
And begynneth the pardoners prologue

**I** Ordynge's quod he in chirche whan I preche  
I peyne me to haue an haunten speche  
And ryng it oute as rounde as goth a belle  
For I can by rote alre that I telle  
My tyme is euir one and alwey was  
Ladiu omnium malorum est cupiditas  
First I pronounce whens that I come  
And than my bylles shewe I alle and some  
Dure liege lordes seale on my patent  
That shewe I first my body to warrent  
That no man be so bolde ne preest ne clerke  
Me to distroube of cristes holy werke  
And after that telle I forth my tales  
Bulles of popes and cardynales  
Of patriarkes and bysshoppes I shewe  
And in latyn I speke wordes a fewe  
To saffron with my predicacioun  
And for to stere men to deuocioun  
Thenne shewe I forth my long cristalle stones  
Ycrammed in cloutes fulle of bones  
Kelykes they been as wene they echone  
Than haue I in laton a sholder bone  
Whiche that was of an holy iewys shepe  
Gode men say I take of my wordes kepe



## The prologue of the Pardonere

If that this boon be wasshe in any welle  
If howe or calf shepe or ox swelle  
That any worme hath ete or him stong  
Take water of this welle and wasshe his tonge  
And it is hole anone. and ferthermore  
Of pokes and of scabbes and euery soze  
Shalle euery shepe be hole that of this welle  
Drynketh a draught take kepe of that I telle  
If that the gode man that the bestes owyth  
Woleuery weke or that the cok crowyth  
Fastyng drynke of this welle a draughte  
As that holy Ieue oure elders taughte  
His bestes and his store shal multiply  
And sires also it helyth ielousye  
And though a man be fallen in ielous rage  
Yet make with this water his potage  
And neuir shal he more his wyf mystryste  
Though he in soth the defaute by her wyf  
Al hadde she take prestys two or thre  
Here is a metayne that ye may se  
He that his honde wol put in this meteyn  
He shal haue multiplyng of his grayn  
Whan he hath sowne be it whete or otye  
So that he offre pens or elles grotys  
Gode men and women one thyng warne I you  
If any wyght be in the chirche now  
That hath done synne so orrible that he  
Dar nat for shame shryuen be  
Or any woman be she yong or olde  
That hath y made her husbonde coheolde  
Suche folke shalle haue no powe ne grace  
To offre to my relyphes in this place  
And who so fyndeth them oute of suche blame

## The prologue of the Pardoner

Comyth by and offre in goddes name  
And I assyle them by the auctorite  
Suche as by bulle was graunted to me  
By this gaude haue I wonne many a pere  
An hundred marke sithen I was pardonere  
I stond lyke a clerke in my pulpet  
And whan lewde people be down y set  
I preche so as ye haue herd bi fore  
And telle an hundred false iapes more  
Than payne I me to stretch forth my necke  
And est and west vpon the people I becke  
As doth a doue syttyng vpon a berne  
My hondes and my tonge goth so yerne  
That it is iope to se my besynesse  
Of auarice and of suche cursydnesse  
Is alle my prechyng to make them fre  
To peue theire pens and namely vnto me  
For myn entent is nat but for to wyne  
And nothyng for correctioun of synne  
I reche nat whan that they be berped  
Though theire soules gone a blake beried  
For certis fulle many a predicacioun  
Sownyth ofte tyme of euyl entencioun  
Som for plesaunce of folke and for flattery  
To been anaunsed by ypocrysy  
And som for beyne glozpe and som for hate  
For whan I dare not othez weye debate  
Than wol styng them with my tong smert  
In prechyng so that they shalle nat astert  
To be diffamed falsely if that he  
Hath trespaced othez to my brethern or to me  
For though I telle nat his propre name  
Men shalle wele knowe that it is the same



## The prologue of the Pardonere

By synes or by other circumstaunces  
Thus quyte I folke that doth vs displeaſaunces  
Thus ſpytte I oute my benygn hndre he we  
Of holynesse to ſeme holy and trewe  
But ſhortly myn entent I wol deuyſe  
I preche of no thyng but of couetyſe  
Therfore my teame is and euir was  
Radix omnium malorum eſt cupiditas  
Thus gan I preche the ſame byce  
To ſuche as be vsyng the synne of auarice  
But though my ſelf be gilty in that synne  
yet can I make other folke to twynne  
from auarice, and ſoze them to repente  
But that is nat my pryncipalle entente  
I preche no thyng but for couetyſe  
Of this matere it ough t ynough ſuffiſe  
Than telle I them enſamples many oon  
Of olde ſtozys long tyme agoon  
For lewde people loue tales olde  
Whiche thynges can they wele reporte and holde  
What trow ye whyles that I may preche  
And for to wynne golde and ſyluer for to teche  
That I wol lyue in pouert wylfully  
Nay nay I neuir thoughte it truly  
For I wol preche and begge in ſondry londes  
I wyl nat do no laboure with myn hondes  
Ne make baſkettes and lyue therby  
Bicauſe I wol nat begge ydelly  
I wolle none of the apoſteles countrifete  
I wol haue money, wole cheſe and whete  
Alie were it geuen of the poureſt patte  
Or of the poureſt wydowe in a byllatte  
Al ſholde her children ſterue for famyn

## The prologue of the Pardoner

May I wol drynke the licoure of the Wyn  
And haue a ioly wenche in euery toun  
But herk neth lordynges in conclusioun  
poure lphynng is that I must telle a tale  
Now I haue dronke a draughte of corny ale  
By god I hope I shalle tel you a thynng  
That shalle by reason be at poure lphynng  
For though my self be a ful byciouse man  
A moralle tale yet I you telle can  
Whiche I am wont for to preche and also Wynne  
Now holde poure peas my tale I wol begynne

Here endith the pardoners prologue  
And begynneth his tale



i In flaunders somtyme Was a company  
Of yong folke that hauntedyn foly  
As ryotte hazarde steyps and tauernys



## The tale of the Pardoner

*The Pardoner's Tale*

Where as With harpes lutes and gyternes  
They daunce and pley at the dyce both day & nyght  
And etyn also and drynken aboue their myght  
Thruogh whiche they done the deuyl sacrifice  
Within the deuylles temple in cursed wyse  
The superfluytees abhomyable  
Theire othes be so grete and so dampnable  
That it is grysely for to here them swere  
Dure blyssed lordes body they to tere  
Them thought the iewys rent him nat ynough  
And eche of them at others synne lough  
And right anone cam in the tomblesterys  
Jetyrs and smale and pong frutesterys  
Syngers With harpes baldes wafreyrs  
Suche as been berzy the deuylles officerys  
To hyndel and blowe the fyres of lychery  
That is annexed vnto glotony  
The holy Wryte take I to wytnesse  
That lychery is in wyne and in dronknesse  
Lo how that dronkyn loth vnhyndely  
Pay by his daughters two vnwetyngly  
So dronke he was he nyght what he wrought  
And therfore soze repente him ough  
Herodis who so wyl the stozes seche  
There may ye lerne and by ensample teche  
Whan he of wyne was replete at the fest  
Right at his owne table paue his heest  
To sle the baptyst John ful gyltes  
Seneke sayth eke gode wordes doutles  
He sayth he can no difference fynde  
Betwix a man that is oute of his mynde  
And a man whiche that is dronke we  
But that wodenes fallen in a shre we

## The tale of the Pardoner

Perseuereth lenger than doth dronknesse  
Dute glotony ful of cursednesse  
Cause first of oure confusioun  
Origynalle synne of oure dampnacioun  
Tyl criste hadde bought vs with his blode agayn  
To how dere shortly for to seyn  
A bought was this cursed belony  
Corrupte was al this worlde through glotony  
Adam oure forþ fadre and his wyf also  
Fro paradise to laboure and to wo  
Were dreyn for that byce it is no drede  
For whiles that Adam fastyd as I rede  
He was in paradise and whan that he  
Ete of the frute defended on the tre  
Anone he was oute cast to woo and peyne  
D glotony on the oughþ vs wele to pleyne  
D wylt a man how many maledies  
Fro we of excesse and of glotonyes  
He sholde be the more mesurable  
Of his dyette sytting at his table  
Alas the shorte throte the tendre mouth  
Makith that est and west north and southe  
In erthe in eyre in water men to swynke  
To gete a gloton depnte mete and drynke  
D poule of this matere wele canst thou entrete  
Mete vnto wombe and wombe eke vnto mete  
Shal god distroye bothe as poule seyth  
Alas a foule thyng it is by seyth  
To say this worde and fouler is the dede  
Whan men so drynkhith of the whyte and rede  
That of his throte he makith his pryue  
Through that cursed superfluyte  
The appostel wepyng sayth ful pytously



## The tale of the Pardonere

Ther walkyn many of whiche you tolde haue I  
I say it now wepyng with pytous voyce  
That they been enymeys of cristes croyce  
Of whiche the ende is deth wombe is their god  
O wombe o bely o styntyng cod  
Fulfylled of donge and of corrupcioun  
At eyther ende of the foule is the soun  
How grete cost and laboure is the to fynde  
These cohes. how they stampe streyne and grynde  
And turne substaunce into accident  
To fulfylle alle thy lycorous talent  
Wute of the harde bones knoken they  
The mary for they cast naught a wey  
That may go through the golet soft and sote  
Of spicery of leuys barke and rote  
Shal be his sause y made by delyte  
To make him yet a newe appetyte  
But certes he that haunteth suche delices  
Is dede whyles that he lyueth in the byces  
Alycherous thyng is wyne. and dronknes  
Is ful of stryuyng and of wrechidnes  
O dronken man diffigured in thy face  
Soure is thy brethe foule art thou to embrace  
And through thy dronken nose sowneeth thy soun  
As though thou saydest ay sampson sampson  
And yet god wote sampson dranke neuir no wyne  
Thou falsyst as it were a styched swyne  
Thy tong is lost and alle thy honest cure  
For dronknesse is berzyp sepulture  
Of manny's wytte and his discrecioun  
In whom that drynke hath dominacioun  
He can no counseyl kepe it is no drede  
Now kepe you fro the white and fro the rede

## The tale of the Pardoner

Namely fro the whyte wyne of lepe  
That is to selle in Brydge strete or in chepe  
This wyne of spayne crepith subtelly  
In othez wynes growyng fast by  
Of whiche ther riseth such fumosite  
That whan a man hath dronke draughtes thre  
And wenyth that he be at home in chepe  
He is in spayne right at the toun of lepe  
Nat at rochel ne at burdeux toun  
And than wol he say sampson sampson  
But herkneþ lordynges one worde þou pray  
That alle the souerayne actes dar þou say  
Of victorpes in the olde testament  
Througþ verry god that is omnipotent  
Were doon in abstinence and in prayez  
Lokith the byble and there ye may it lere  
Lokith Attylla the grete conqueroure  
Dyed in his slepe with shame and dishonoure  
Bledyng ay at his nose in dronknesse  
A capdeyne sholdelyue in sobirnesse  
And our alie this auyse þou right wele  
What was comaunded vnto lamuele  
Nat samuel but lamuel say þou  
Redith the byble and fynde it expressely  
Of wyne peyung to them that haue iustice  
Nomore of this for it may suffice  
a Now now that þou haue spoke of glotony  
Now wol I defende þou hasardry  
Hasardry is verry modre of lesynges  
And of disceyte and cursed swerynges  
Blasphemye of criste manslaughtez and waste also  
Of catel and of tyme and ferthermo  
It is reпреf and contrary of honoure



## The tale of the Pardonere

Foz to be holden a comon hasardoure  
And euir the higher that he is in estate  
The more he is holden desolate  
If that a prynce vse hasardry  
In alle gouernaunce and alle policie  
He is as by comon opunyon  
y holde the lasse in reputacioun  
Stylbone that was holde a wyse enbassedoure  
Was sent into corynthe with grete honoure  
fro calidon to make them alliaunce  
And whan he cam him happyd this chaunce  
That alle the gretest that were of that londe  
Pleyng at the hasard he them fonde  
For whiche as sone as that it myght be  
He stak him home aye to his countre  
And sayde there wyl I nat lese my name  
I wol nat take on me so grete defame  
you for allye to none hasardours  
Sendith othez wyse enbassadours  
For by my trouthe me were lyuer dye  
Than I you to hasardours sholde allye  
For ye that been so glorious in honoures  
Shalle nat alpe you to no hasardours  
As by my wylle ne as by my trectye  
To this wyse philosophes thus sayd he  
Boke eke thou to the kyng demetryus  
The kyng of parthes as the boke sayth vs  
Send him a peyre of dyce of golde in scozne  
For he hadde used hasarde ther biforn  
For whiche he helde his gloz and his reuoun  
At no balue or reputacioun  
Lordes myght fynde othermanez pley  
Honest ynough to drue the day a wey

## The tale of the Pardoner

n     Now wol I speke of othes false and grete  
A worde or two as many bokes trete  
Grete sweryng is a thyng abhomynable  
And false sweryng is a thyng more reprovablen  
The hight god forbade sweryng at alle  
Wytnesse of Mathew but in specialle  
Of sweryng sayth holy Jeromy  
Thou shalt swere soth thy othes and nat lye  
But swere in dome and in right wysnesse  
But ydel sweryng is a cursydnesse  
Behorde and se that in the first table  
Of the hight goddes hest is honourable  
How that the seconde heest of him is this  
Take nat my name in ydelnesse amys  
So rather he forbedith suche sweryng  
Than homycide or any othe cursed thyng  
I say as by ordre thus it stondith  
This knowe they that his heestys vnderstonde  
How that the seconde heest of god is that  
And ferthermore I wol the telle at plat  
That vengeance shalle nat parte from the house  
That of his othes is to outrageous  
By goddes precious hert and his nayles  
And by the blode of criste that in hayles  
Seyn is my chaunce and thyng is synke and trey  
By goddes armes if thou falsly pley  
This daggar shalle through thy herte go  
This fruyte comyth of the beched bones two  
For sweryng ire falsnesse and homycide  
Now for the loue of criste that for vs deyde  
Letyth poure othes bothe grete and smale  
For cristes sake and herkne my tale  
These ypotounes thre of whiche I telle



## The tale of the Pardonere

Rong or to pryme Were rong any belle  
Were set them in a tauerne to drynke  
And as they sat they herd a belle clynke  
Bifore a cors Were caried to his graue  
That one of them gan calle to his knaue  
Go bet quod he and aye redily  
What corps is this that passeth forth hye  
And loke that thou reporte his name wele  
Sir quod the boy it nedith neuir a dele  
It was me tolde or ye cam here two oures  
He was parde an olde felowe of yours  
Al sodenly was he slayn to nyght  
For dronke as he sat on his benche spryght  
Ther cam a pruy thief men clepe deth  
That in this countre alle the people sleth  
And with his spere he smote his herte atwo  
And went his wey withoute wordes moo  
He hath a thousand sleyn this pestilence  
And mayster or ye come in his presence  
Me thynketh it were necessary  
For to be ware of suche an aduersary  
Deth is redy for to mete him euirmore  
Thus taught me my dame I say no more  
A seint mary sayd this tauerne  
The childe sayth soth for he hath this pere  
Hens ouir a myle sleyn in a grete byllage  
Bothe man and woman childe hyne and page  
I trowe his habitacioun be there  
To be auy sed grete wysdome it were  
Or that he dyd a man a dishonoure  
ye goddes armes sayde this ryottoure  
Is it suche peryl with him for to mete  
I shaile him seke by wey and eke by strete

## The tale of the Pardoner

I shalle him sle by goddes digne bones  
Berhyn felowes we be thre alle onys  
Let eche of vs become others Brothel  
And eche of vs holde by his honde to other  
And we wol sle this traytoure deth  
He shal be slayn he that so many sleth  
By goddes dignyte or it be nyght  
To gydder haue these thre their trouthes plight  
To lye and by eche of them with other  
As though he were his owne borne Brothel  
And by they stert alle dronke in this rage  
And forth they gone toward that byllage  
Of whiche the tauerner hath spoke bifore  
And many a grysly othe haue they sworn  
And cristes blissed body they tozent  
Deth shalbe ded if that he may be hent  
Whan they haue goon nat fully a myle  
Right as they wolde haue gone ouir a stile  
An olde man and a poure with them mette  
This olde man ful mekely them grette  
And sayd thus lordynges god you se  
The proudest of these riotoures thre  
Answerd what chorde with harde grace  
Why art thou alle forwrapped saue thy face  
Why lyuest thou so long in so grete age  
This olde man gan loke in their bysage  
And sayde thus for I can nat fynde  
A man though I walke into ynde  
Neyther in cyte ne in byllage  
That wol chaunge his yowthe for myn age  
And therfore must I haue myn age styll  
As long tyme as it is goddes wyll  
Ne deth allas wol nat haue my lyf



## The tale of the Pardonere

Thus walke I lye a restless captyf  
And on the grounde whiche is my moders gate  
I knoke with my staf erly and late  
And say to her leue modre let me in  
To how I banysse flesshe blode and shyn  
Allas when shalle my bones be at rest  
Moder with you wolde I chaunge my cheste  
That in my chambrelong tyme hath be  
ye for an heire cloute to wrappe in me  
But yet to me ye wol nat do that grace  
For whiche ful pale and wrechyd is my fac  
And sires to you it is no curtesy  
To speke to an olde man belony  
But he trespase other in worde or dede  
ye may poure self in holy wryte rede  
Apenst an olde man hore vpon his hede  
ye sholde aryse wherfore I pou rede  
Ne doth to none olde man hazme now  
Nomore than ye wolde men dyd to you  
In age if ye sholde longe abyde  
And god be with you where ye go or ryde  
I must go thider as I haue to do  
Nay olde chorle by god thou shalt nat so  
Sayde this other hasardoure anoon  
Thou partest nat so lyghtly by seint John  
Thou spakest right now of that traytoure dethe  
That in this countre alle oure frendes sleth  
Haue here my trouthe thou arte his a spy  
Tel where he is or thou shalt it aby  
By god and by the holy sacrement  
For shortly thou arte one of his assent  
To sle vs yong folke thou fals theef  
Now sires quod he if it be your leef

## The tale of the Pardoner

To fynde deth turne by this croked wey  
For in this groue I him sawe last by my fey  
Vndre a tre and there he wol abyde  
For youre boost he wol no thyng him hyde  
Se ye that oke right there ye shal him fynde  
God saue you that boughte agayn mankynde  
And you amende thus sayd this olde man  
And euery of these ryottoures ran  
Tyl they came to the tre and there they fonde  
Of floreyns fyne golde y coynded rounde  
Wele ygyth an ygyth busselles as them thought  
No longer than after deth they sought  
But eche of them so glade was of that sight  
For that the floreyns so faire were and bright  
That they sat by the precious horde  
The worst of them he spake the first worde  
Brethern quod he take hepe what I say  
My wytte is grete though that I bourd and pley  
This tresoure hath fortune bnto vs yeven  
In myrthe and iolite oure lyf to lyuen  
And lyghtly as it comyth so wol we spende  
By goddes precious dignite who wende  
To day that we shold haue so fayre a grace  
But myght this golde be caried fro this place  
Home to my house and elles bnto poures  
Than myght we say that it were al oures  
Than were we in high felicite  
But truly by day it may nat be  
Men wolde say that we were theys strong  
And for oure owne tresoure doon vs hong  
This tresoure must be caried by nyght  
As wysely and as skilly as it myght  
Wherfore I rede let loke amonges vs alle



## The tale of the Pardonere

Dra we cutte let se where that it wol falle  
He that hath the shortest cutte with hert blythe  
Shal renne to toun and that fulle swythe  
To brynge vs brede and wyne fulle pryuelly  
And two of vs shalle kepe fulle subtelly  
This tresoure wele and if he wol nat tary  
Whan it is nyght we wol this tresour cary  
By one assent where as vs lyst best  
That one of them brought strawe in his fist  
And bad them dra we and loke whom on it wold fal  
And it felle on the pongest of them alle  
And forth towarde the toun he went anon  
And also sone as he was goon  
That one of them spake thus vnto that othez  
Thou wotest wele thou art my sworn Brothez  
Thy proufyt wol I take the right anon  
Thou wost wele that oure felawe is goon  
And here is golde and that ful hrete plente  
That shalbe departed amonges vs thre  
But natheles if I can shape it so  
That it departed were amonges vs two  
Hadde I nat doon a frendes turne to the  
That othez answerd I not how it myght be  
I wote wele the golde shalbe oures two  
What shal we say what shalle we do  
Shalle it be counceyle sayd the first shrewe  
And I shal tel the in wordes fewe  
What we shalle do and brynge it wele aboute  
I graunte quod that othez oute of doute  
That by my trouthe I wol the nat be wey  
Now quod he thou wotest wele we be twey  
And tweyne of vs shal strengere be than one  
Loke whan that he is set thou right anone

## The tale of the Pardonere

Arise as though thou woldest with him pley  
And I shalle him ryue through the sydes twey  
Whiles thou strogelest with him in game  
And with thy daggez loke thou do the same  
Than shalle alle this golde departed be  
My dere frende betwixte me and the  
Than may we bothe oure lustes fulfyll  
And pley at the dyce right at oure owne wyll  
And thus accorded be these shrewys twey  
To slep the thridde as ye haue herd me say  
This yongest whiche that went to the toun  
Fulle ofte in hert he rollith by and down  
The beaute of these flozeyns newe and bright  
O lord quod he if so were that I myght  
Al this tresoure wyne to my self allone  
Ther nys no man that lyueth vndre trone  
Of god that sholde lyue as mery as I  
And at the last the feende oure enemy  
Put in his herte that he sholde porson be  
With whiche he myght sle his felawes twey  
For why the fend fonde him in suchelynyng  
That he hadde leue him in sorowe to bryng  
For this was bitterly his entent  
To sle them bothe and neuer to repent  
And forth he goth ne lenger wolde he tary  
Into the toun vnto an apotecary  
And prayed him that he wolde him selle  
Som porson that he myght his rattes quelle  
And eke therwith was a polcat in his haue  
That as he sayd his capones hadde y slaue  
And sayde he wolde wreke him if he myght  
Of vermy that dristroyed him by nyght  
The apotecary answerd thou shalt haue



## The tale of the Pardonere

A thyng as wysely god my soule saue  
In alle this worlde ther is no creature  
That ete and drynke of this confectione  
Nat but the mountenaunce of a corne of whete  
That he ne shal anoon his lyf forlete  
ye sterue he shalle and that in lasse whyle  
Or thou wylt go passyng half a myle  
This popson is so strong and so byolent  
This cursed man hath in his herte it hent  
This popson in a bove and sithen he ran  
Into the nexte strete vnto a man  
And borowed him large botelles thre  
And into the tweyn the popson poured he  
The thridde he hepte cleene for his drynke  
For al nyghte he shope him for to swynke  
In carying of this golde oute of this place  
And whan this ryottoure with sovy grace  
Hadde fylled with wyne his grete botelles thre  
To his felawes aye repayreth he  
What nedith it to sermone of it more  
For right as they hadde cast his deth afore  
Right so they haue him sleyn right anoon  
And whan this was done than spake that one  
Now let vs sytte and drynke and make vs mery  
And afterwarde we wol his body bery  
And afterwarde it happyd them percaas  
To take the botel there the popson was  
And draunke and paue his felawe drynke also  
For whiche anone they steruyn bothe two  
But certis I suppose that Auicene  
Wrote neuiz in no canoun ne in no fenne  
More wondre sorowes of enpopsonyng  
Than hadde these wrechis two in theire endyng

## The tale of the Pardonere

Thus endyd been these homycides tuo  
And eke the false enpoysonez also  
O cursed syn fulle of cursidnesse  
O traytours homycide o wychednesse  
O glotony oluxury o hasardry  
Thou blasphemez of crist With belony  
And othes grete of vsage and of pryde  
Alas mankynde how may it betyde  
That to thy creatour whiche that the wrought  
And with his precious blode the bought  
Thou art so false and so bukynde alas  
Now gode men god foryeue you your trespass  
And ware you from the synne of auarice  
My holy pardoun may you alle warice  
So that ye offre nobles oz sterlinges  
Dor elles siluer spones broches oz rpynges  
Bowith youre hede bndre these holy bulles  
Comyth bp ye wyues offreth of youre wolles  
your names I entre in my rolle anoon  
Into the blisse of heuyn shalle ye goon  
I you assyle by my high powez  
you that wol offre as clene and as clere  
As ye were bore to fires thus I preche  
And Jesu crist that is oure soules leche  
So graunte you his pardoun to resceyue  
For that is best I wol you nat deceyue  
But sires o worde forgate I in my tale  
I haue relyphes and pardoun in my male  
As fayre as any man in englonde  
Whiche were me yeue by the popes honde  
If any of you wol of deuocoun  
Offre and haue myn absolucioun  
Comyth forth anoon and knelith here adoun



## The tale of the Pardonere

And mehely receyueþ youre pardon  
Or elles takith pardon as ye wende  
Alle newe and fresshe at euery myles end  
So that ye offre alwey newe and newe  
Nobles or pens whiche that been gode and trewe  
It is an honoure to eueryche that is here  
That ye may haue a sufficient pardonere  
To assople you in countre as ye ryde  
For auentures whiche that may betyde  
For parauenture ther may falle one or two  
Down of his horse and breke his necke a two  
Pohe whiche a surete it is to you alle  
That I am in youre felausship y falle  
That may assople you bothe more and lasse  
Whan that the soule shalle from the body passe  
I rede that oure hoost here shalle begynne  
For he is moost enuoluped in synne  
Come forth sir hoost and offreth here anone  
And thou shalt kysse the relyphes euerychone  
Ye for a grote vnboke anone thy purse  
May nay quod he than haue I cristes curse  
Let be quod he it shal nat be so theche  
Thou woldest make me to kysse thyn olde breche  
And swere it were a relyphe of a seint  
Though it were with thy fundement y peynte  
But by that croce whiche that seint eleyen fonde  
I wolde I hadde thy colyons in myn honde  
In stede of relyphes ether of seynt Mary  
Let cutte them of I wol helpe the them to cary  
They shal be shryned in an hottes tozd  
This pardonez aunswerd nat a word  
So wroth he was he wolde no worde say  
Now quod oure hoost I wol no lenger pley

## The tale of the Pardonere

With the ne With none other angry man  
But right anone the worthy knyght began  
Whan that he sawe that alle the people lough  
No more of this for this is right ynough  
Sir pardonez be mery and glade of chere  
And ye sir hoost that be to me so dere  
I pray you that ye kyssse the pardonere  
And pardonez I pray the drawe the nere  
And as we dyd let bslaughte and pley  
Anone they kyssed and ryden forth thire wey

Here endith the Pardoners tale  
And begynneth the shipmannes tale



a Marchaunte somtyme Was at seint Denys  
That riche Was therfore men helde him wyse  
A wyf he hadde of excellent beaute  
And compenable and reuelous Was she



## The tale of the Shypman

Whiche is a thyng that causeth moze dispence  
Than worth is alle the chere and reuerence  
That men them doon at festes and at daunces  
Suche salutaciouns and countenaunces  
Passen as doth a shadowe on a walle  
But wo is him that pay must for alle  
The sely husbond algate he must paye  
He must be bothe clothe and eke aray  
Alle for his owne worship fülle richely  
In whiche aray we daunse iolily  
And if that he nought pay parauenture  
Welles lyst nat suche spences endure  
But thynketh it is wastyd and y lost  
Than must a nother pay for oure cost  
Wlene be golde and that is parlous  
This noble marchaunt helde a noble house  
For whiche he hadde so grete repeyre  
For his largenes and for his wyf was fayre  
That wondre was but herk neth to my tale  
Amonge alle these gestes gret and smale  
Ther was a monke a fayre man and a bolde  
I trowe that threty wynter he was olde  
That euer in one was drawyng to that place  
This yong monke that was so fayre of face  
Aqueynted was so with the gode man  
Sithen that theire first knowlege began  
That in his house as famplier was he  
As it is possible any frende to be  
But forasmuche as this gode man  
And eke this monke of whiche I began  
Were bothe two born in one byllage  
The monke him claymeth as for cosynage  
And he ayen sayth nat onys nay

## The prologue of the Shypman

But was as glade therof as foule of day  
For to his herte it was a grette plesaunce  
Thus been they knytte with etern alliaunce  
And eche of them gan other for to ensure  
Of brotherhede while that theire lyf may dure  
Fre was dan John and namely of dispence  
As in that house and fulle of dyspygence  
To doon plesaunce and also grette costage  
He nat forgate to geue the lest payge  
In alle that house but after his degre  
He paye the lord and also his menye  
Whan that he cam som maner honest thyng  
For whiche they were as glade of his comyng  
As foule is fayn when the sonne by riseth  
Nomore of this for it suffiseth  
But so besyl this marchaunte on a day  
Shope him to make redy his aray  
Towarde the touyn of bruges for to fare  
To by there a porcioun of Ware  
For whiche he hadde to parys sent anon  
A messangere and prayed hath dan John  
That he sholde come to seint denys and pley  
With him and his wyf a day or twey  
Or he to bruges went and alle wyse  
This noble monke the whiche I pou deuysse  
Hath of his abbot as him lyst licence  
Bicause he was a man of high prudence  
And eke an officere oute for to ryde  
To se theire graunges and thei herneys wyde  
And to seint denys comyth him anone  
Who was so welcome as my lord dan John  
Dure dere cosyn fulle of curtesy  
With him he broughte a Sub of maluesy



## The tale of the Shypman

And eke another fulle of fyne Bernatte  
And volatyle as was his vsage  
And thus Jlete them ete drynke and pley  
This marchaunt and this monke a day or twey  
The thridde day the marchaunte vp riseth  
And on his nedys sadly him auyseth  
And vp to his counterhouse goth he  
To rekne with him self wele may be  
Of that yere how that it with him stode  
And how that he dispendyd had his gode  
And if encresyd he hadde or noon  
His bokes and his bagges many one  
He lepyth biforn him on his countynge borde  
Fulle ryche was his tresoure and his horde  
For whiche fulle faste his countre he shitte  
And eke he nolde that no man sholde him lette  
Of his accountynge for the meame tyme  
And thus he sat tyl it was passed pryme  
Dan John was ryse in the morowe also  
And in the gardyn walked to and fro  
And sayd his thynges ful coriously  
This gode wyf cam walkynge pryuesly  
Into the gardyn there as he walked soft  
And him salued as she hath doon ofte  
A mayde childe cam in her company  
Whiche as she lyst she may gouerne and tye  
For yet vndre the perde was the mayde  
O dere cosyn myn dan John she sayd  
What ayleth you so rathe for to ryse  
Nece quod he it ought ynough suffise  
Fyue oures to slepe on a nyght  
But it were for an olde palled wight  
As been these weddyd men that lye and dare  
kk i

## The tale of the Shypman

As in a fouzme sytteth a berzy hare  
Were alle forstraught With houndes grete and smale  
But dere nece why loke ye now so pale  
I trowe certis that oure gode man  
Hath pou laboured sithen the nyght began  
That pou were nede to reſte haſtely  
And with that worde ſhe lough fulle merely  
And with her owne thought weyt alle rede  
This ſayre wyf gan ſhake her hede  
And ſayd thus ye god wote alle quod ſhe  
May coſyn it ſtondith nat ſo with me  
For by that god that paue me ſoule and lyf  
In alle the reame of ſfraunce is ther no wyf  
That laſſe luſt hath to that ſorz pley  
For I may ſyng allas and wel a wey  
That I was born but to no wight quod ſhe  
Dar I nat telle how it ſtondith with me  
Wherfore I thynke oute of this londe to wende  
Or elles of my ſelf to make an ende  
So fulle I am of drede and eke of care  
This monke began vpon this wyf to ſtare  
And ſayd allas my nece god forbede  
That ye for any ſorowe or for any drede  
Fordo poure ſelf but telle me your greef  
Parauenture I may in your myſchief  
Counceyl or helpe and therfore tellith me  
Alle your annoye for it ſhalle ſecret be  
For on my porthoſe here I make an othe  
That neuer in my lyf for leef ne loth  
Ne ſhal I of no counſeyl you bewrey  
The ſame quod ſhe to you I ſay  
By god and by this porthoſe I you ſwere  
Though men wol me alle to peces tere



## The tale of the Shypman

Ne shal I neuiz to go to helle  
Be wrey one worde of that ye me telle.  
Nat for no cosynage nor alliaunce  
But verily for loue and affiaunce  
Thus been they swore and therupon they hyft  
And eche talkyd to othez what them lyft  
Cosyn quod she if that I hadde space  
As I haue non and namely in this place  
Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf.  
What I haue suffrid sithen I was a wyf  
With my husbonde al be he poure cosyn  
Nay quod this monke by god and by seint martyn  
He is no more cosyn vnto me  
Than is the leef that hangith on the tre  
I clepe him so by seint denys of fraunce  
To haue the more cause of acquentaunce  
Of you whom I haue louyd specially  
Above alle othez women sikerly  
This swere I you on my professioun  
Tellith your greef lest he come adoun  
And hyth you and go a wey anon  
My dere loue quod she o my dan yson  
Fulle leef were me this counseyl to hyde  
But oute it must it may no lenger abyde  
My husbond is to me the worst man  
That euer was sithen the worlde began  
But sithen I am his wyf it sytteth nat me  
To telle no wight of oure pryuyte  
Neyther in bedde ne in none othez place  
God shelde I sholde tel it for his grace  
A wyf sholde nat say of her husbonde  
But alle honoure as I can vnderstonde  
Saue vnto you thus moche I telle shal I

## The tale of the Shypman

As helpe me god he is nat worth at al  
In no degre the value of a flye  
But yet me greuyth moost his nyggarde  
And wele ye wote that women naturallly  
Desire thynges sye as wele as do I  
They worde that theire husbonde sholde be  
Baroy and wyse riche and therto fre  
And buyum to his wyf and freshe abedde  
But by that ilke lord that for vs bledde  
For his honoure my self for to araze  
A sonday next I must nedes pay.  
An hundred fraunkes and ellis I am fore  
yet were I lyuer to be ynboze  
Than me were do disclaunde2 oz belony  
And if my husbonde myght it sye  
I nere but lost and therfore I you pray  
Lene me this summe oz elles must I deye  
Dan John I say lene me this hundred frankes  
Parde I wol nat fayle you my thankes  
If that ye lyst to do that I you pray  
For at a certayn day I wol you pay  
And doon to you what plesaunce oz seruyse  
That I may do right as ye lyst deuise  
And but I do god take on me vengeaunce  
As foule as hadde genplyon of fraunce  
This gentyl monke aunswerd in this maner  
Now truly myn owne lady dere  
I haue on you quod he so grete a routh  
That I you swere and plight my trouthe  
That whan youre husbonde is to fflaundes fare  
I wol delyuer you oute of this care  
For I wol brynge you an hundrid frankes  
And with that worde he caught her by the shank



# The tale of the Shypman

And her embraced hard and kyssed her oft  
Goth now youre wey quod he alle styl and softe  
And let vs dyne as sone as ye may  
For by my kalendar it is pryme of the day  
Goth now and beth as trewe as I shal be  
Now elles god forbede sir quod she  
And forth she goth as ioly as a pye  
And hadde the cokes that they sholde hye  
So that men myght dyne at none  
Up to her husband is this wyf gone  
And knockith at his countour boldly  
Who is there quod he. petyr it am I  
Quod she. what sir how long wolle ye fast  
How long tyme wol ye rekyng and cast  
your summes your bokes and your thynges  
The deuyll haue parte of alle suche rekynges  
ye haue ynough parde of goddes sonde  
Come down to day and let your bagges stonde  
Ne be ye nat ashamyd that dan John  
Shal fasten alle this long day gone  
What let vs go here a masse and go dyne  
ye quod this man lytel canst thou dreyn  
The coriouse besynesse that we haue  
For of vs chapemen also god me save  
And by that lord that clpyd is seint pue  
Scarcely among twyes ten twelue shalle shryue  
Contynualy lastyng vnto theire age  
We may wele make chere and gode bysage  
And dryue forth the worlde as it may be  
And kepe oure astate in pryuyte  
Tyl we be dede or elles that we pley  
A pylgramage or goon oute of the wey  
And therfore haue I grete necessite

## The tale of the Shypman

Vpon this queynte worlde to auyse me  
For euirmore we must stonde in drede  
Of happe and fortune in oure chape manhede  
To flaunders wol I go to morowe at day  
And come aye as sone as euir I may  
For whiche dere wyf I the beseeke  
As be to euery wight buyum and meke  
And for to kepe oure gode be curious  
And honestly gouerne wele oure house  
Thou hast ynought in euery maner wyse  
That to a thyrsty housholde may suffice  
The lackith none aray ne no bytaye  
Of syluer in thy purse shalt thou nat fayle  
And with that worde his counterdore he sopte  
And down he goth he wolde no lenger let  
And hastely a masse was there sayde  
And spedily the tables were layde  
And to dyner fast they them spedde  
And richely the chapman this monke fedde  
And after dyner day John sobirly  
This chapman toke a parte propirly  
And sayd him thus cosyn it stondith so  
That wele I se to bruges wol ye go  
God and seint Austyn spede you and gyde  
I pray you cosyn wysely thider ye ryde  
Gouerne you also wele of youre dyete  
Attemperatly and namely in this hete  
Betwyte us tWo nedith no straunge fare  
Fare wele cosyn god shelde you fro care  
And if any thyng by day or by nyght  
Be in my powez or in my myght  
That ye me wolde comaunde in any wyse  
It shalbe do right as ye woldeuyse



## The tale of the Shypman

One thyng or that ye goon if it may be  
I pray you to lene it vnto me  
An hundred fraunches for a weke or twey  
For certayn bestys that I must beye  
To store with a place that is oures  
God helpe me so I wolde it were poures  
I shalle nat fayle of my day  
Nat for a thousand frankes o myle wey  
But let this thyng be secret I you pray  
For yet this nyght this bestys I must beye  
And fare now wele myn owen cosen dere  
Gramercy of poure coost and of poure there  
This noble marchaunt and that anon  
Answerd and sayde o cosyn myn dan John  
Now siberly this is a smalle request  
My golde is poures whan that ye lyst  
And nat only my golde but my chaffare  
Take that ye lyst god shylde that ye spare  
But one thyng ye knowe wele ynough  
Of chapmen that theire money is their plough  
We may creaunce whyles we haue a name  
But godeles for to be it is a shame  
Pay it ayen whan it lyth at poure ease  
After my myght fayne wolde I you please  
These hundred fraunches sette he forth anon  
And pryuelly he toke them to dan John  
No wight of alle this londe wist of this lone  
Saupng this marchaunt and dan John allone  
They drynke and speke androme a while and pley  
Tyl that dan John rydeth to his abbey  
The morowe cam and forth rideth this marchaunt  
To flanders ward his prentyce brought him auaunt  
Tyl he cam to brugges wele and merily

kk im

## The tale of the Shypman

Now goth this marchaunt wele and be sily  
Aboute his nedys and byeth and creaunce th  
He neyther pleyeth at the dyce ne daunsith  
But as a marchaunte shortly to telle  
He ledde his lyf and theire þet him duelle  
The sonday next that this marchaunt was agoon  
To seint denys is comen dan þho  
With crowne and berd alle fresshe and newe shaue  
In alle this house ther nas so lytel a knaue  
Ne no wight elles but he was ful fayne  
That my lord dan þhon was come agayn  
And shortly to the poynthe right for to goon  
This faire wyf accordeth with dan þhon  
That for his hundryd frankes he sholdelaf nyght  
Haue her in his armes bolt vp right  
And this accorde parfourned is in dede  
In myrthe alle nyght a besy lyf they lede  
Tyl it was day that dan þhon yede his we  
And bad the meny fare wele and haue gode day  
For none of them ne no wight in the toun  
Hath of dan þhon any suspicioun  
And forth he rydeth home to his abbey  
Or where him lyst no more of him þ say  
This marchaunt whan that endyd was the feyre  
To seint denys he can agayn repaire  
And with his wyf he makith feest and chere  
And tellith her the chaffare is so dere  
That nedes must he make a cheuesauce  
For he was bounde in a reconysauce  
To pay twenty thousand sheldes anon  
For whiche this marchaunt is to paris gone  
To borowe of certayn frendes that he hadde  
Acertayn of frankes and some with him he ladde



## The tale of the Shypman

And whan that he was come into the toun  
For cheirte and grete affectioun  
Vnto dan John he goth first him to pley  
Nat for to aye ne borowe of him money  
But for to wytte and se his welesfare  
And for to telle him of his chaffare  
As frendes doon whan they mete in fere  
Dan John him makith feste and mery there  
And he him tolde fulle specialy  
How he hadde wele spedde and graciously  
Thanked be god alle hool his marchaundise  
Saue that he must in alle maner wyse  
Makyn a cheere saunce as for the best  
And than he sholde be in ioy and rest  
Dan John aunswerd certis I am fayne  
That ye in hele ar comen home agayn  
And if that I were rithe as I haue blis  
Of twenty thousand sheldes sholde ye nat mys  
For ye so kyndely this othez day  
Lent me golde and as I can and may  
I thanke you by god and by seint Jame  
But natheles I toke it vnto oure dame  
Poure wyf at home the same golde aye  
Vpon poure benche she wote is wele certayn  
By certeyn tokenes that I can you telle  
Now by poure leue I may no lingere duelle  
Dure abbot wol oute of this toun anon  
And in his company must I goon  
Grete wele oure dame myn owen nece swete  
And fare wele dere cosyn tyl we mete  
This marchaunt whiche that was ful ware & wyse  
Creaunced hath and payd eke in parise  
To certayn lumbardes redy in theire honde

## The tale of the Shypman

The some of golde and gage of hem his bonde  
And home he goth as mery as a popynnyng  
For wele he knewe he stode in suche array  
That nedes must he wyne in that byage  
A thousand fraunkes aboue alle his costage  
His wyf ful redy mette him at the gate  
As she was wont of olde vsage algate  
And alle that nyght in myrth they be set  
For he was riche and clerely oute of det  
Whan it was day the marchaunt gan embrace  
His wyf alle newe and kyssed her in her face  
And by he goth and makith it fulle tough  
Nomore quod she by god ye haue ynough  
And watounly with him se pleyed  
Tyl atte last the marchaunte thus sayd  
By god quod he I am a lytel wrothe  
With you my wyf alle though it be me lothe  
And wote ye why by god as I gesse  
That ye haue made a maner straungenesse  
Betwyte me and my cosen dan John  
ye sholde haue warned me or I had goon  
That he hadde you an hundred fraunkes paide  
By redy token and helde him euyl appaied  
For that I to him spake of cheuesauce  
We semyd so as by his countenaunce  
But neuirthelesse be god oure heuyn kyng  
I thought to aske of him nothyng  
I pray the wif do no more so  
Tel me now or that I fro the goon  
If any dettoure haue in myn absence  
ppaied the lest by thy nettegence  
I myght him aske a thing that he haue paied  
This wyf was nat afferde ne affreyde



## The tale of the Shypman

But boldly she saide and that anoon  
Mary I diffy that fals monke dan John  
I nepe nat of his toknes neuiz a deel  
He toke me certayn golde that wote I wele  
What. euyl thedom on his monkes snowte  
For god it wote I wende withouten doute  
That he hadde geuen it me bicause of you  
To do therewith myn honoure and my prowte  
For cosynage and eke for belychere  
That he hath hadde fulle often tymes here  
But sithen I se it stont in suche disiont  
I wol aunsweere you shortly to the poynnt  
Ye haue no flatterer dettoure than am I  
For I wol pay you redily  
Iro day to day if so be that I fayle  
I am youre wyf score it spon my tayle  
And elles I shalle pay as sone as euir I may  
For by my trouthe I haue on myn arazay  
And nat in wast bestowed it euerydeel  
And for I haue bestowed it so wele  
For youre honoure for goddes sake I say  
As be nat wrothe and let vs laught and pley  
Ye shalle my ioly body haue to wedde  
By godde I wol nat pay yow but abidde  
Forgyue it me myn owne spouse dere  
Turneth hether makith bettre there  
This marchaunt sawe ther was none other remedy  
And for to chide it were but a foly  
Sithen that thyng may noon other be  
Now wyf he saide and I forgyue it the  
And by thy lif be no more so large  
Kepe beeter thy gode this gyue I the in charge  
Thus endith my tale and god vs sende

## The tale of the Shypman

Takyng ynogh vnto oure lyues ende

Here endith the shypmannes tale

And begynneth the wordes of the hoost

W He sayd by corpus dominus said oure hoost

Now long moot thou sayle by the coost

Thou gentyl mayster gentyl marinere

God geue the monke a thousand last quad pere

A ha fela wes be ware of suche a iape

The monke put in the mannys hode an ape

And in this wyse eke by seint Austyn

Dra with no monkes no more to youre Inne

But now pas our and lette vs seke aboute

Who shalle telle a tale first of alle this route

A nother tale and with that worde he sayde

As curtesly as it hadde be a mayde

My lady priouresse by youre leue

So that I wylst I sholde you nat greue

I worde deme that ye telle sholde

A tale nexte if so were that ye wolde

Now wol ye bouchesauf my lady dere

Gladly quod she and sayd as ye shal here

Here endith the wordes of the hoost

Here begynneth the priouresses prologue

Domine dominus noster quam admirabile

est nomen tuum in vniuersa terra.

I Orde oure lorde thy name euir marvelous

Is in this lartge worlde y spred quod she

For nat alle only on thy laude precious

Parfourmyd is by men of dignyte

But by the mouthe of children thy bounte

Parfourmed is for on the brest sowhyng

Somtyme she we they thyn heryng

Wherfore in laudes as I can and may



## The prologue of the Prioressse

Of the and of the white lily floure  
Whiche that the bare is a mayde alwey  
To telle a story I wol do my labour  
Nat that I may encrese her honoure  
For she her self is honoure and the rote  
Of bounte nexte her sonne and soules bote  
O moder mayd o mayde and modre fre  
O busshe vnbrent brennyng in moyses sight  
That rauesshedyst down from the deyte  
Through thy humblenes the goost that in the light  
Of whose vertue whan he thy hert lyght  
Concepued was the faders sapience  
Helpe me to telle it in thy reuerence  
Lady thy bounte thy magnificence  
Thy vertue and thy grete humylite  
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science  
For somtyme lady or men praye the  
Thou goost biforn of thy benignyte  
And getyst vs the light of thy prayer  
To gyde vs vnto thy sone so dere  
My honnyng is so weke o blyssfulle quene  
For to declare thy high worthynesse  
That I ne may the weyght sustene  
But as a childe of twelmonth olde or lesse  
That can vnneth any worde expresse  
Right so fare I and therfore I you pray  
Bidith my song as I shalle you say

Here endith the priouresses prologue  
And here begynneth her tale

## The tale of the Priouresse



t Her was in Asie in a grette cyte  
Amonge cristen folke a Surpe  
Susteyned by a lorde of that countre  
For foule vsure and lucre of belony  
Hateful to crist and to his company  
And through this strete men myght ryde and wend  
For it was fre and open at euery ende

A lytel scole of cristen folke there stode  
Doun at the ferther ende in whiche ther were  
Children an hepe comen of cristen blode  
That lernyd in scole yere by yere  
Suche maner doctryne as men vsen there  
This is to say to synge and to rede  
As smale children doon in theire childhede

Among these children was a wydowes sone  
A lytel clerk yon seyn yere of age  
That day by day to scole was his wone  
And eke also where that he sawe the ymage



## The tale of the Shypman

Of cristes modre had he in vsage  
As him was taught to kni le adoun and say  
His Aue maria as he goth by the wey

Thus hath this wydow her lytel sonne taught  
Oure blissed lady cristes modre dere  
To worship ay and he forgate it naught  
For the sely childe wolde al wey sone lere  
But whan I remembre me on this matere  
Seint nycolas stont euir in my presence  
For he so yong to crist dyd reuerence

This lytel chyld his litel booke lernyng  
As he sat in the scole at his prymer  
He Alma redemptoris mater herd synng  
As children lernyd their antiphoner  
And as he durst he drewe ay nere and nere  
And herknyd ay the wordes and the note  
Tyl he the first verscoude alle by rote

Naught wist he what this latyn was to say  
For he so yong and tendre was of age  
But on a day his fela we gan he pray  
To expounde him the song in his langage  
Or telle why this song was in vsage  
This prayde he him to constrewe and declare  
Fulle ofte tymes vpon his knees baze

His fela we whiche that elder was than he  
Aunswerd him thus this I haue herd say  
Was made of oure blissed lady fre  
Her to salue and eke her to pray  
To be oure helpe and socoure whan we dey  
I can no more expounde in this mater  
I lerne song I can but lytel gramez

And is this song made in reuerence  
Of cristes modre sayd this innocent

## The tale of the Priouresse

Now certayn I wol do my diligence  
To conne it alle or cristmas is al y went  
Though that I for my pryme be shent  
And sholde be bete thries in an houre  
I wor it honne oure lady to honoure

His fela we taught him homward pryuelly  
Fro day to day tyl he coude it al by rote  
And than he song it wele and boldly  
Fro worde to worde accordyng by the note  
Twys aday it passed through his throte  
To scoleward and homward when he went  
On cristes modre set was alle his entent

As I haue sayd through oute the Jury  
This lytel childe cam walkyn to and fro  
Ful merily wolde he syng and cry  
O alma redemptoris mater euirgo  
The swetnesse his hert persed so  
Of cristes modre that he to her pray  
He can nat stynt of syngyng by the wey

Oure first to the serpent sathanas  
That hath in iewes hert his waspes neste  
Up swalle and said o ebrayn people alas  
Is this a thyng that is to vs honest  
That suche a boy shal walke as him lyst  
In youre dyspyte and syng of suche sentence  
Whiche is ayeust oure lawes reuerence

Fro thens forth the Jewys haue conspired  
This innocent oute of this worlde to chase  
An homicyde therto haue they hyred  
Right at an alep hadde a pryue place  
And as the chylde gan forth by to pace  
This cursyd Jewe him hent and held fast  
And cutte his throte and in a pytte him cast



## The tale of the Priouresse

I say that in a Wardrobe they him threwe  
Where as the Jewys purghe their entrayl  
Cursed folke of herodes alle newe  
What may your euyl entent you auayle  
Murdre wol oute certeyne it wol nat fayle  
And namely ther the honoure of god shal sprede  
The blode oute crieth on your cursed dede

A martir sowdyd into virgynite  
Now mayst thou synge folowynge euir in one  
The white lambe celestiaile quod he  
Of whiche the grete euangelyst seint John  
In pathmos wrote whiche sayth that they goon  
Bifore this lambe and synge a song ay newe  
That neuer flesshely woman they ne knewe

This poure widow a wayteth alle that nyght  
After her lytel childe and he cam naught  
For whiche as sone as it was day light  
With face pale of drede and besy thought  
She hath at scole and elles where him sought  
Tyl fynally so fer she gan espye  
That he last seyn was in the Jury

With moders pyte in her brest enclosed  
She goth as she were halfoute of her mynde  
To euery place where she hath supposed  
By lykelihede her lytel childe to fynde  
And euir on cristes modre meke and kynde  
She cryde and at the last thus she wronght  
Among the cursed Jewes she him sought

She aveth and she freyneth pytously  
Of euery Jew that duellyd in that place  
To telle her if her childe went ought forth by  
They sayd nay but iesu of his grace  
paue in her thought within a lytel space  
That in that place after her sone she cryde

## The tale of the Priouresse

Where he was cast in a pyt besyde

O grete god that parfourmyth thy laude  
By mouth of innocentes lo here thy myght  
This gemme of chastite this emeraude  
And eke of martirdome the ruby bright  
There he with throte y coruen tyth by right  
He Alma redemptoris gan to synge  
So loude that alle the space gan for to rynge

The cristen folke that by the strete went  
In cam for to wondre bpon this thyng  
And hastely they for the prouost sent  
Whiche fonde the chylde freshely yet bledynge  
And herieth crist that is of heuyn kyng  
And eke his modre honoure of mankynde  
And after that the Jues let he bynde

This childe with pytous lamentacion  
Up taken was synge this song alway  
And with honoure and grete processoun  
They cary him into the nexte abbey  
His moder swounyng by the bere ley  
Wnneth myght the people that was there  
This sorouful rachel brynge from the bere  
With turment and with shameful deth echoon  
This prouest doth thies Jewes for to sterue  
That of this murdre wist and that anon  
He nolde no suche cursydnesse obserue  
Euyll shal he haue that euyll wol deserue  
Wherfore with wylde horse he dyd them drawe  
And after he haungyd them by the laue

Vpon his bere aplyeth this innocent  
Bifore the high autre while the masse last  
And after that the abbot and his couent  
Them spredde for to bery him ful fast  
And whan they holy water on him cast



## The tale of the Priouresse

yet spake this childe whan sprent was holy water  
He song o alma redemptoris mater,

This abbot whiche that was an holy man  
As monkes been or elles ought to be  
This yong childe to coniure he began  
And sayd o dere childe I coniure the  
In the vertue of the holy trinite  
Tel me what is thy cause for to syng

Sithen that thy throte is cutte to my sempyng  
My throte is cutte but buto my necke boon  
Sayd this chylde and as by wey of kynde  
I shorde haue dyed ye long tyme a goon  
But Jesu crist as ye in bokes fynde  
Wol that his glory last and be in mynde  
And for the worship of his moder dere  
yet may I syng o alma loude and clere

This welke of mercy cristes modre swete  
Glouyd alwey as after my konnyng  
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete  
To me she cam and badde me for to syng  
This anteme verily in my dyng  
As ye haue herde and whan that I hadde song  
As thoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tong  
Wherfore I syng and syng must certayn

In honoure of that blyssed mayde fre  
Tyl fro my tong taken is the greyn  
And after that thus sayd she to me  
My lytel childe than wol I feche the  
Whan that the greyn is fro the tong y take  
Be nat agast I wol the nat forsake

This holy monke this abbot him mene I  
His tongge oute caught and toke a wey the greyn  
And he paue vp the goost fulle sofly  
And whan this abbot hadde this meruayle seyn

## The tale of the Priouresse

His salt terys trilled down as rayne  
And grouelyng platte he fyl to the grounde  
And styl he lay as he hadde be y bounde

The couent eke lay vpon the pament  
Weppynge and heripnge cristes modre dere  
And after that by they rose and forth they went  
And toke a wey this martir fro his bere  
And in a tombe of marbyle stones chere  
Enclosen they this lytel body swete  
There he is now god lene vs for to mete

O yong hugh of lyncoln slayn also  
With cursed Jues as it is notable  
For it is but a lytel while ago  
Pray eke for vs we synful folke vnstable  
That of his mercy god so mercynable  
O vpon his grete mercy multiplie  
For reuerence of his modre mary

Here endith the priouresse tale

Here folowith the prologue of chauncers tale  
W     Bryn sayd was this myracle euery man  
As sobre was that wondre was to se

Tyl that oure hoost to iapen began  
And than at erst he lokyd vpon me  
And sayd thus what man art thou quod he  
Thou lokest as thou woldest fynde an hare  
For euir vpon the grounde I se the stare

Approche nere and loke by merily  
Now ware you sires and let this man haue place  
He is shapen in the wast as wele as I  
This were a popet in an arme to embrace  
For any woman smalle and fayre of face  
He semyth elyssh by his countenaunce  
For vnto no wight doth he daliaunce  
Say no w somwhat sithen other folke haue



## Ryme of Sir Topas

Tel vs a tale of myrthe and that anon  
Hoost quod he ne be nat euyl appayd  
For othez tale certayn can I none  
But of a ryme I lernyd long a goon  
ye quod he that is gode ynough let vs here  
Som depnte thyng me thynketh by thy chere  
Here endith the prologue  
And begynneth Ryme of sir Topas



**I** ften lordes in gode euten  
And I wol telle herament  
Of myrthe and of solace  
And of a knyght fayre and gent  
In batel and in turnament  
His name was was sir Topas  
y borne he was of fer countre  
In flaundes alle he yonde the see  
At popoynng in the place  
His fader was a man ful fre  
A lorde he was of that countre

## Ryme of Sir Topas

As it was goddes grace  
Sir Topas went a doughty sweyne  
White was his face as paynemayne  
His lippes reed as rose  
His rode is lyke scarlet in greyn  
As I telle you in gode certayn  
He hadde a semely nose  
His here his berde was lyke saffron  
That to his gyrdyl raught a doun  
His shone of fyne cordwane  
Of brugges were his hosen broun  
His robe was of sylcatoun  
That cost many a jane  
He coude hunt at the wylde dere  
And ryde an haukyng for ryuere  
With grey goshauke on honde  
Therto he was a grete archere  
Of wraстыng was ther none his pere  
Ther any ram sholde stonde  
Ful many a mayde bright in boure  
They mozned for him paramoure  
Whan them were bet to sleke  
But he was chaste and no lechoure  
And swete as is the brome floure  
That berith the rede hepe  
And so it fel bpon a day  
For soth as I you telle may  
Sir Topas wolde oute ryde  
He worde bpon his horse gray  
And in his honde a launce gay  
A long swerde by his syde  
He pryched through a fayre forest  
Therin is many a wylde best  
ye bothe bukke and hare



## Ryme of sir Topas

And as he pryched north and est  
I telle it you him hadde almest  
Betwde a soz care  
Ther sprongen herbes grete and smale  
The licorice and the retuale  
And many a clove gilofez  
And notemyge to put in ale  
Whether it be moyst or stale  
Or for to lay in cofre  
The birdes syng it is no nay  
The sperhaune and the poppyngay  
That ioye was to here  
The throstyl made eke his lay  
The wode ooune vpon the spray  
He sang ful loude and clere  
Sir Topas fyr in loue longyng  
At whan he herde the thrustyl syng  
And pryched as he were wode  
His fayre stede in his prichyng  
So swette that man myght him wryng  
His sydes were al blode  
Sir Topas eke so wery was  
For prichyng in the soft gras  
So fiers was his corage  
That down he leyde him in the place  
To make his stede some solace  
And pauce him gode forage  
A seint mary benedicite  
What ayleth this loue at me  
To bynde me so soze  
Ope dremyd alle this nyght parde  
An elfe quene sholde my lady be  
And stepe vndre my goze  
An elfe quene wol I haue y wys

## Ryme of Sir Topas

For in this worlde no woman is  
Worthy to be my make in toun  
Alle othez women I for sake  
And to an elphe quene I me take  
By dale and eke by doun  
Into his sadyl he clambe anoon  
And pricked ouer stile and stone  
An elphe quene to a sppe  
Tyl he so long hath ryden and goon  
That he fonde a pryue Wone  
In the countre of fayre so wylde  
For in that countre was ther none  
Neyther wyf ne chylde  
Tyl that ther cam a grete ghaunt  
His name was sir oliphaunt  
A parlous man of dede  
And sayde childe by termaghaunt  
But if thou pryche oute of myn haunt  
Anone I sle thy stede With mace  
Here is this quene of fayre  
With harpe and lute and symphony  
Duellynge in this place  
The childe sayde also moot I the  
To morowe wol I mete with the  
Whan that I haue myn armoure  
And yet I hope par my fay  
That thou shalt with this launce hay  
Abpen it ful soze Thy ma we  
Shal I perce if may  
Or it be fully pryue of the day  
For here shalt thou be slaue  
Sir Topas drewe a bake fulle faste  
The ghaunt at him stones cast  
Dute of a fyl staf slynge



## Ryme of sir Topas

But fayre a scappd sir Thopas  
And al was through goddes grace  
And through his faire berpnyng  
ye lysteneth lordynges to my tale  
Merper than the nyghtyngale  
I wol with you rounne  
How sir Thopas with spydes smale  
Prickyng our hylle and dale  
Is come agayn to toun  
His mery men comaundith he  
To make him bothe game and glee  
For nedes must he fight  
With a gyaunt with hedes thre  
For paramoure and iolite  
Of one that shone so brighte  
Come do he sayde my mynstralles  
And gestoures for to telle tales  
Anone in my armyng  
Of romaunces that been ryalle  
Of popes and of cardynalle  
And eke of loue longyng  
They fet him forth swete wyne  
And mede in a messelyne  
And ryalle spycloze  
Of gyngebrede that was so fyne  
And lycorice and eke comyn  
With sugre that is try  
He hadde nexte his white lere  
Of clothe alake fyne and clere  
A breche and eke a sherte  
And next his shert a baketon  
And our that an habergeon  
For perspyng of his herte  
And ouer that a fyne hauberke

## Ryme of Sir Topas

Was alle y wrought of Iues warthe  
ful strong it was of plate  
And ouer that his cote armoure  
As whyte as is the lyly floure  
In whiche he wol debate  
His shelde was al of golde so rede  
And therin was a bores hede  
A charbokyl by his syde  
And there he swore on ale and brede  
How that the gyaunt shalbe dede  
Betyde what may betyde  
His ianbedeux were of quyreboty  
His swerd is shethe of yuorpy  
His helme of latoun bright  
His sadyl was of rewelbone  
His byrdel as the sone shone  
Or as the mone light  
His spere was of fyne cypresse  
That bedith warre and nothyng peas  
The hede fulle sharpe y grounde  
His stede was alle dappyl gray  
It goth an amble in the wey  
Fulle softly and rounde in londe  
O lordynges myn here is a fytt  
If ye wol any more of it  
To telle yet wolke I fonde  
n     Ow holde your mouthe paz charite  
       Bothe knyght and lady fre  
And herkneth to my spelke  
Of a batayl of cheualry  
And of ladyes loue drurye  
Anoon I wol you telle  
Men speke of Romaynes of pryce  
Of hornchylde and of ppytse



## Ryme of sir Topas

Of beuys and of sir Guy  
Of sir libeuy and of sir playndemoure  
But sir Topas berith the floure  
Of ryalle cheualry  
His gode stede alle he bestrode  
And forth vpon his wey he rode  
As sparke oute of bronde  
Vpon his creest he bare a toure  
And therin styched a lyly floure  
God shelde his body from shonde  
And for he was a knyght auenterous  
He nolde slepe in none house  
But liggyn in his hode  
His bright helme was his wongez  
And by bapteth his destrez  
On herbes fyne and good  
Him self dranke water of the Welle  
As dyd the knyght sir percypuel  
So worthely vndre wede  
n    D more of this for goddes dignyte  
For thou quod oure hoost makyst me  
So wery of thy berzyle wdnesse  
That also wys god my soule bles  
Wyn eris akyn of thy drafty speche  
Now suche a ryme the deuyt I betech  
This may wele be a ryme doggrel quod he  
Why so quod I why wolt thou let me  
More of my tale than a nother man  
Sithen it is the best ryme that I can  
By god quod he fulle playnly at one worde  
Thy drafty rymyng is nat worth a torde  
Thou dost naught elles but spendest tyme  
Sir at one worde thou shalt no lenger ryme  
Let se whether thou canst aught telle in geste

## The Wordes of the hoost

Or telle in prose som what at the lest  
In whiche ther may be some myrthe or doctryne  
Gladly quod he by goddes swete pyne  
I wol you telle a lytel thyng in prose  
That ought to lyke you as I suppose  
Or elles certayn ye be dangerous  
It is a moral tale vertuons  
Al be it tolde somtyme in sondry wyse  
Of sondry folke as I shal you deuyse  
And thus ye wote that euery euangelyst  
That telle vs the payne or Jesu crist  
Ne sayth nat alle thyng as his fela we doth  
But neuir theles their sentence is alle soth  
And alle accordyng as in their sentence  
Al be ther in their tellyng difference  
For som of them sayth more and some lesse  
Whan they his pytous passioun expresse  
I mene of marke mathewe Luke and Ihon  
But doubtles their sentence is alle one  
Therfore lordynges I you besече  
If that ye thynke I bary in speche  
As thus though I telle some dele more  
Of prouerbes than ye haue herde bifore  
Comprehended in this lytel tretys here  
To enforce with the effecte of my matere  
And though I nat the same wordes say  
As ye haue herde yet to you alle I pray  
Blamyth me nat for as in my sentence  
Shulle ye nowhere fynde no difference  
For the sentence of this tretys lyte  
After the whiche mery tale this I wryte  
And therfore herkueth what I shalle say  
And let me telle my tale I you pray  
Sequitur Chaucers tale



The Tale of Chaunte



a yong man that called was  
 mellebeus the whiche was  
 myghty and ryche begat a  
 doughter vpon his wyf that called  
 was prudence. whiche doughter cal-  
 led was. Sophye. vpon a day besyl  
 that he for his disporte wente hym in  
 to the feidys for to playe. his wyf &  
 his doughter hath he lefte within his  
 hous of wiche the dores were fast  
 shutte. Thre of his olde foes hath hit  
 aspyed & sette ladders vnto the wal-  
 les of his hous & by the wyndowes  
 ben entryd in And bete his wyf: and  
 wounded his doughter with fyue mor-  
 tal woundes in fyue sondrye places  
 that is to say in her feet. in her han-  
 des. in her eres. in her nose and in her  
 mouth. and lesten her for dede and  
 wenten her waye. whan mellebeus  
 returned was in to his hous and sa-  
 we al this myschysse. he spke a mad-

man rented his clothes began to we-  
 pe and crye.

p rudence his wif as ferforth  
 as she durst besoughte hym  
 of his weping to stynte. But  
 not forthy he began to wepe & crye  
 euer lenger the more. This noble  
 wyf prudence remembred her vpon  
 the sentence of Dydde in his booke  
 that cleped is the Remedye of loue.  
 where as he sayth. he is a fool that  
 distrobleth the modre to wepe in the  
 dethe of her childe. tyl she hath wepte  
 her fille as for a certayn terme. And  
 than shal a man doo his diligence  
 wyth ampyable wordes her to com-  
 forte. And praye her of her wepyng  
 to cese. for whiche reason this noble  
 wyf prudence suffryd her husbonde  
 to wepe & crye as for a certayn space  
 And whā she sawe her tyme. she said  
 to hym in this wyse. Alas my lord

A i.



sayd she why make ye your self for to be lyke a fool for soth it apertayneth not to a wyse man to make such the sorowe your doughter by the grace of god shal watrishe & escape. & al were it so þ she right now were dede. ye ne ought not for her deth your self to dystrope. Senekhe sayth. the wyse man shal take not to grete dyffort for the deth of his children. but certes he shuld suffre it in patience as wel as he abydeþ the deth of his own propre persone.

**T**his mellebe<sup>9</sup> answerd anon and sayde what man shote of his wepyng stynte þ hath so grete cause to wepe. Ihesu cryst our lord hym self wepte for the dethe of lazarus his frende. Prudence answerd certes wel I wote a temperate wepyng is nothing defended to hym that is sorowful amonge folk in sorowe. But it is rather graunted hym to wepe. The apostle Paule vnto the Romayns wryteth. Many shal reioyse wþ hem that make ioie and wepe wþ such folk as pynne. But a temperate wepyng tough it be graunted hym. Outrageous wepyng certis is defeded mesure of wepyng shold be considred after the lore þ Senekhe techeth. Bewha thy frende is dede sayd he. Lete not thin eyen be to moost of teyrs ne to moche drie. Al though thy teyrs com to thy eyen late hem not falle. And whan thou hast lost thy frende. do dyligently to gete the another frende. And this is better than for to wepe for thy frende

whiche thou hast lost. For therein is no bote. And therefore yf thou gouerne the by sapience put away sorowe out of thy herte.

**R**emembre the that Ihesus Syrali sayth. That a man that is Joyous & glade in herte. it hym conserueth flourisshyng in age. and sothly sorowful herte maketh his bones drye. He sayth also thus that sorowe in herte sleeth ful many a man. Salamon sayth that as moghtes in the shep fles anoyeth the clothes. & the smale wommes the tres. Right so anoyeth sorow the herte of a man. wherfor be ought as wel in the deth of our chyldren as in the losse of our goodes temporell haue patience. Remembryng on the patient Job. Whan he had lost his children and his temporel goodes & had endured many a ful greuous temptation. yet sayd he thus. Dur lord hath gyuen it to me. Dur lord hath beraste hit me. right so as our lord hath wold right so it is don. y blessid be the name of our lord.

**T**o this forsayd thinges answerde mellebeus to his wyf prudence alle thy wordes ben soth said he and therto proufftable. But truly myn hert is trobelid with this sorowe so greuously that I wote not what to doo. Late al thy trewe frendes sayd prudence & alle thy synage whiche that ben wise come vnto the. & telle to them your caas and herken what thy say in couceylling & gouern you after her sentence.



Salamon saith werke alle thy thinges by counceyl & thou shalt neuer repente. Than by cause of the counceyl of his wyf prudence. This Mellebeus lete callen a grete congregacyon of folkre as Lirurgyens. Phisiciens: olde folkre and yonge and some of his olde enemyes recounceyled as by theyr semblance to his loue & to his grace and there Bithall came somme of his neyghbours that dyd hym reuerence more for drede than for loue as it happeth ofte. There comen also many subtil flateres and wyse aduocates lerned in the lawe. And whan thyse folkre to gyder assembled were. This Mellebeus shewed to them in sorowe ful wyse his caas And by the maner of his speche hit semed that in his herte he bare a cruel yre redy to do vengeance vpon his foos. and sodenly desyred that he shol begynne the warre. But neuer theles yet ayed he theyr counceyl vpon this mater. A cytyrgyen by lycence and assente of suche as were wyse to se vp. And to Mellebeus sayd as ye may here.

He sayd he as to vs Cytyrgyens. hit apperteyneth þ we doo to euery wyght the best that we can doo. where as we be wythholden and to our partye that we do no damage. wherfor hit happeth many tyme and ofte That whan two men haue the other wounded one Cytyrgyen heleth hem bothe. wherfore vnto our arte hit is not pertynent to norisse we. ne

partyes to supporte. But certes as to the warpysshynge & helyng of your doughter al be it so that she be peryllously hurt and wounded. we shal do ententif besynes fro day to day. that wyth the grace of god she shalle be hool and sound as sone as possible is. Almost in the same wyse the phisiciens answered saue that they sayden a fewe wordes moo. That lyke as maladyes ben cured by theyr contraries. right so shal men warpysshe werre by pees. His feyned frendes þ semed reconceyled and his flaterers made semblaunte of wepyng & empyred and grutchid moche in this mater. Preysyng gretely mellebeus of myght. of power of rychesse and of frendes. dispraysing the power of his aduersaries. and sayd sterly. þ he anone shold wrelen hym on his aduersaries begynnynge warre. By roose than an aduocate þ was wyse by leue and by counceyl of other that were wyse. And sayd lordynge for the nede whiche we ben assembled in this place is ful heuy thing and high mater by cause of the wronge and of the wyckednes that hath ben don and elze by reson of the grete damages that in tyme comynge be possible to falle for the same. And elze by reson of the grete richeshe and of the power of the partyes bothe. For the whiche hit were a ful grete peryll to erren in this mater. wherfor mellebeus this is our entent. we counceyl you: aboue al thing that right anon thou do dysligence in slepyng of thy



propre persone in suche wyse þ thou  
ne want none espye ne watche. thy  
body for to saue. & after in thy hous  
we counceylle that thou sette suffici-  
ent garnyson so as they may as wel  
thy body as thy hous defende. But  
certes for to meue warre ne sodenly  
for to do vengeance. we may not de-  
me in so lytyl tyme that hit shold be  
prouffitable wherfor we aye leyser  
a space to haue delyberacion in this  
caas to deme. For the comyn prouer  
sayth thus He that sone demeth. sone  
shal repente. and elie men say that. þ  
Juge is wyse þ sone vnderstondeþ  
a mater and Jugeþ by leyser. For  
alle be it so that tarpeng be noyful.  
Algate it is not to be reproued in pe-  
uyng of Jugement ne in vengeance  
takyngh whan it is sufficient & reso-  
nable. And that shewed our lord ihu  
cryst by ensample. for whan the wo-  
man þ was taken in adhoutry was  
brought in his pence to knowe what  
shold be do of her personne. Al be it þ  
he wyft welie hym self what he wold  
do. yet ne wold he answere soudenly  
but he wolde haue delyberacion. and  
in the ground he wrote twyes. And  
by this cause we aye delyberacioun  
and we shal than by the grace of god  
couceyl yow that thing that is most  
proffitable. Up starte than the  
yonge folke attones & the most par-  
te of this copanye haue scorned thys  
olde wyse man and begonne to ma-  
ke noyse and saiden Right so as whi-  
le that yron is hote men sholde smite.  
Right so while that this thing is ful  
she and newe shold men wrelen her  
wronges. And wyth a loude voyce

they cryden warre. warre. Up rose  
then one of this olde wyse men. and  
made contenance wyth his hande þ  
men shold holde hem styl & yee hym  
and yence. Lordynges sayd he ther is  
ful many a man that cryeth warre  
warre that wote full ytyl what war-  
re amounteth. warre at his begyn-  
nyng hath so grete an entree and soo  
large þ euery wyght may entre whā  
hym lyeth & lyghely fynde warre.  
But certes what ende that therof shal  
falle it is not lyght to knowe. for so-  
thly whan that warre is ones begon  
there is full many a childe vnborne  
of his moder that shal dye and sterue  
yong by cause of that warre or ellys  
lyue in sorowe or depe in wretchyd-  
nesse. And thefor or ony warre begin-  
men must haue grete counceyl & gre-  
te delyberacion. And whan this olde  
man wende to haue enforced his tale  
by reasons. wel nyghe attones began  
they al tarise for to breke his tale and  
bad ful faste his wordes tabregge.  
For sothly who so precheth to them  
that haue no luste to here his tale his  
wordes or his sermon anoyeth them  
for Ihesus sprak sayth that musike  
in wyppyngh is a noyous thing. This  
is as moche to saye. as moche away-  
leth to speke before folke. to whom  
his speche anoyeth. As it doth to sur-  
ge before hym that wepeth And whā  
this olde man sawe þ he wanted au-  
dience Al shamefast he sette hym dōn  
agayn. For salamon saith. there as  
thou mayst haue none audience. en-  
force the not to speke. I see wel said  
this wyse man þ the comyn prouerbe  
is soth. That good couceyl wanteth



whan it is moſte nede.

Et had this mellebeus in  
p his counceyl many folke  
that priuely in his ere coun-  
ceylled hym certayn thinges & coun-  
ceylled hym contrarie in general au-  
dience. whan Wellebeus ſawe that  
the gretteſt parte of his counceyl we-  
re accorded that he ſhould make war-  
re. anon he condeſcended to theyr coun-  
ceylling and fully affirmed theyr  
ſentence.

p lord ſaid prudence I you  
m beſeche as hertheſp as I da-  
re & can ne haſte you not  
to faſte. And for alle guerdons as  
yeue me audyence. for piers alſons  
ſayth. who ſo doth to the other good  
or harme haſte the not to acquyte it.  
for in this wyſe thy frende wyl aby-  
de. and thy enemy ſhal the lenger  
lyue in drede. The prouerbe ſayth he  
haſtith wel that can abyde wyſely. &  
in wyſedrede haſte is no proſſyt.

His Wellebeus anſwerde  
t to his wyf prudence. I pur-  
poſe not ſayd he to welre  
by thy counceyl for many cauſes and  
reſons for certes euery wyght wold  
holde me than a fool. this is to ſaye  
yf I for thy counceylling wold cha-  
nge thinges that ben ordeyned and af-  
fermed by ſo many wyſe peple. Ses-  
condly I ſaye that alle women ben  
wicked and none good of them alle.  
for of a thouſand men ſayth ſalamō  
I fond one good. But of al women  
certes good women ſonde I neuer  
noon. And alſo certes yf I gouerne

me by thy counceyl it ſhould ſeme that  
I hade gyue to the ouer me the maſ-  
trey. And god forbode that it were ſo  
for Iheſus ſprak ſayth that yf thy  
wyf haue the maſtrey. She is con-  
trarious to her huſbond. And ſala-  
mon ſayth to thy wyf ne to thy chy-  
lde ne to thy frende neuer in thy lyf ne  
yeue power ouer thy ſelf. for better  
it were that thy chyl dren aye of the  
thynges that hem nedeth. than thou  
ſe thy ſelf in the hondes of thy chy-  
lren and certes yf I ſhould werch by  
counceylling my counceyl muſt be  
ſomtyme ſecret tyl it were tyme that  
it muſte be knowe. And this may  
not be yf I ſhould be counceyllid by  
the. for women can kepe no counceyl

han dame prudence fulde  
w bonapety and wyth grete  
pacience hade herde al that  
her huſbond liſte for to ſay. thā ayed  
ſhe of hym licence for to ſpekke & ſayd  
in this wyſe my lord ſayd ſhe as to  
your firſt reſon it may lightly be anſ-  
werd for I ſay that it is no ſolpe to  
chaunge counceyl whan the thyng  
is chaunged or ellis whan the thyng  
ſemeth other wyſe thā it was before  
and more ouer I ſay though that ye  
haue ſworn and be hyght to per for  
me your empyſe. and by Iuff cauſe  
ye do it not. men ſhoulde not ſay ther-  
for that ye were a lyer ne forſworn.  
for that booke ſayth þ the wyſe man  
maketh no leſpug whan he tomethe  
his corage to the better. And al be it  
ſo that your empyſe be eſtablyſſhid  
and ordeyned by grete multitude of



peple. yet dar ye not accomplisshē h  
same ordenaunce but yow like. for  
the trouthe of thynges and the prof  
fyt be rather found in fewe folkie that  
ben wyse and full of reson than by  
grete multytude of peple wher enery  
mā claterith what h him lyst. sothly  
suche multytude of peple is not ho  
nest. and to the second reson wher as  
ye sayn that al women ben wycked  
Save your grace. certes ye despise al  
women in this wyse. and he that all  
despiseth. al despiseth as saith the bo  
ke. ⁊ senekie sayth who so wol haue  
sappence shal no man dyspraise. but  
he shal gladly teche the science that he  
can wythout presumption. or pryde.  
And suche thynges as he can not. he  
shal not be ashamed for to lerne hem  
and enquire of lasse folkie than hym  
self. And that there hath ben many a  
good woman. it may be preuyd. for  
crist wolde neuer descende for to be  
borne of a woman. yf al womē had  
be wycked. and after that for the gre  
te bounte that is in our lord ihu crist  
whan he was risen from deth to lyf.  
apperid rather to a woman than to  
his appostles. and though that sala  
mon said he fond neuer womā good  
yet foloweth not therfor that al wo  
men ben wycked for thought he fond  
de no good woman certes many a  
nother mā hath fonden many a wo  
man ful good. and ful trewe. or ellis  
peraventure the intent of Salamon  
was this that in souerayn bounte he  
fond no woman. This is to say that  
there is no wyght so good that he ne  
wanteth som of the perfectiō of god

that is his malier.

But thryde reson is this.  
n ye saye that yf ye gouerne  
you be my counceyl it shol  
de seme that ye had yewe me the maist  
trye and the lordship ouer your perso  
ne. Syre saue your grace. it is not so  
yef it so were that noman shold bee  
councelled but only of hem that had  
lordship and maistrie of his persone  
Men wold not be counceyled so of  
te as they ben. for sothly that man h  
ayeth couceyl of a. purpos. yet hath  
he his fre choyse whether he wyl wer  
ke by that couceyl or not. And as to  
your fourth reson there that ye say h  
the Janglerye of woman can not hy  
de thynges that they knowe. as who  
sayth a woman can not hyde h shee  
woot. Syre thysse wordes been to  
vnderstonde of women h ben Jan  
glersses and wickid of whiche wo  
men men say. that thre thynges dry  
uen a man sone out of his hous that  
is to saye. smolre. droppynge of rayn  
and wyckid wyues. And of suche  
women sayth Salamon. that it we  
re better to dwellen in deserte. than  
wyth a woman that is ryotous. and  
syr by your leue that am not I.  
for ye haue ful ofte assayed my gre  
te splence and my grete patience.  
And elie how wel I can hyden and  
hele thynges that men ought secretly  
to hyde. And sothly as to your  
fyfthe reson where that ye saye that  
in wickid counceyl women bayn  
quisshe men. god wote that reson sta  
deth here in no stede. for vnder  
stonde now that ye aye counceyl to



so wyckednes And yf ye wol werke  
wyckednes. And your wyf restrayn  
ne that wycked purpoos and ouer  
come you by reison and by good coun-  
ceyl. Certes your wyf ought rather  
to be praysted than to be blamed.

Thus shold ye vnderstode the philo-  
sophre that wickid women bayn-  
quisshe her husbondes. And there as  
ye blamen alle women and her re-  
sons. I shalle shewe by ensample þ  
they be good and prouffitable. Eke  
somme men haue sayd that the coun-  
ceyl of women is to dere. or ellis to  
litel of pryys. But al be it so þ many  
women be bad. & her counceyleuyl  
and nothing worth. yet haue men  
founde ful many a good woman &  
discrete and wyse in counceyllunge.  
Lo Iacob be the counceyl of his mo-  
der Rebecca whan the blessing of y-  
saachis fader and the lordship ouer  
al his brethern. Judith by her goode  
counceyl deliuered the cite of Beethule  
in whiche he dwellyd out of the han-  
des of olyppernes that had besieged  
it and wold haue it destroyed. Abi-  
gail deliuered Nabal her husbond  
fro dauid the kynge that wolde haue  
slayn hym And preesyd the pre of the  
kynge by her wytte and by her good  
counceyl. Hester by the counceyl  
enchaunced gretely the people of god  
in the Regne of Assuerus the kynge  
& sam the bouite in good counceyllunge  
of many a good woman men may  
telle. And eke more ouer whan our  
lord god had made Adam our for-  
mer fader. he sayd in this wyse. it is

not good man to be allon. make we  
to hym an helpe semblable to hym  
for io here may ye see that yf womē  
were not good and her counceyl good  
and prouffitable. Our lord god of  
heuen wold neu haue wrought hem  
ne callid hem helpe of man but ra-  
ther confusion of man. And thes-  
e sayd ones a clerk in two versys.  
What is better than Iaspar. wysedom  
And what is better than wysedom:  
woman & what is better than good  
woman. no thyng. And so fyr by  
mony other reisons may ye see that  
many women been good and theyr  
counceyl good and prouffitable.

And therfor yf ye wyl trust to my  
counceylling I shal restore you your  
doughter hool and founde. And eke  
I wyl do so moche that ye shalle ha-  
ue honour in this caas. Whan  
mellebec had herde the wordes of his  
wyf Prudence. He sayd thus. I see  
wel that the worde of Salamon is  
soth: He saith that wordes that been  
spokyn discretely by ordenaunce ben  
honycrombes for they geue sweteness  
to the soule & holssomnes to the body.

By cause of thy swete wordes &  
eke for I haue assayed and preued  
thy grette sapience and thy grette trou-  
the I wyl gouerne me by thy coun-  
ceyl in al maner thyng.

Now fyr sayd dame prudence. syn  
ye bouchesau to be gouerned by my  
counceyl I wyl enforme you how  
ye shal gouerne you in chesping of  
your counceyl. first to fore al wer-  
kys ye shal beseeche the hyghe god þ



he be your counceyl. & shape yow to su  
che entent þ he yeue yow counceyl &  
cōforte As to þe taught his sone At  
al tymes thou shalt plesse & praye him  
to dresse thy wayes And loke that al  
thy counceyl be in hym for euermore

Saynt Iame elre sayth. yf ony of  
you haue nede of sapience. Aye it of  
god And after that than shal ye talre  
counceyl in your self. And exampne  
wel your thoughtes of suche thinges  
as ye thynke that ben beste for your  
prouffyt And than shal ye dypue a  
way from your hertes tho thinges þ  
ben contraryous to good counceylle  
this is to say. yre. couetyse. & haste  
nesse. first he that ayeth counceyl of  
hym self. Certes he must be wythou  
ten yre. for many causes. The firste  
is this þ he that hath grete yre and  
wrath in hym self. he weneth alway  
to do thyng that he may not do. and  
secondly he that is prous & wrathful  
may not deme wel And he that may  
not deme wele may not wel counceyl  
Another is this. he that is prous &  
wrathful as sayth Senekie may not  
speke but blameful thynges. And  
wyth his vycious wordes he stereth  
other folke to angre and to yre And  
elre spt ye must dypue couetyse out of  
your herte for thapposle sayth that  
couetyse is the rote of alle harmes.  
And truste wel that a couetous man  
can not deme wel ne thynke but on  
ly to fulfille the ende of his couetyse  
and certes that may neuer be accom  
plysshed. For euer more the more ha  
bundance a man hath of richesse.  
the more he despyeth. And ye muste

also dypue out of your herte hasty  
nes. for certes ye may not deme for  
the beste hasteli a soden thought that  
falleth in your herte. Dyt ye muste  
aryse you an it ful ofte. for as ye  
herde to fore the comyn puerbe. whi  
che is this. he that sone demeth sone  
repenteth. Dyt ye be not alway in  
lyke dysposicion for certes somtym  
suche thyng as semeth that is good  
for to do. Another tyne it semeth to  
you the contrarpe. And whan ye ha  
ue talre counceyl in your self and ha  
ue demed by good delyberacion su  
che thyng as semeth you beste. Than  
I counceyl you to liepe it secrete And  
bewraye not your counceyl to ony  
pson but yf it so be þ ye wene silyer  
ly þ through your bewrapeng youre  
condicion shalle be to yow the more  
prouffitable for ihūs sprak saith.  
nether to thy frende. ne to thy foo dis  
couer not thy secrete counceyl. ne thy  
folpe. for they wyl yeue the aydiu  
ce. lokyng & supportyng in your pre  
sence. And scorne you in your absen  
ce. An other clerke sayth that scarce  
ly shalt thou fynde ony persone that  
may liepe counceyl secretely. The bo  
ke saith whiles þ thou liepest thy cou  
ceyl in thy herte. thou liepest it in thy  
pyrson. & whan thou wrapest hit to  
ony wyght he holdeth the in his snare.  
And therfore it is better to hyde  
your counceyl in your herte. than pra  
ye hym to whom ye haue bewrapped  
your counceyl that he wold liepe it  
cloes & styfle. for seneca saith yf it  
be so that thou ne may thy counceyl



hyde how darst thou pray onp other  
wpght to hyde thy counceyl & kepe it  
secrete. But yf thou wene silyrly þ  
thy bewrapping of thy counceyl to a  
persone wyl make thy cōdition fion  
ding in the better plyght. than shalt  
thou telle hym thy counceyl as in this  
wyse. first thou shalt make no sen  
blauce whether the were leuer pces  
of werre or this or that ne shewe him  
not thy wyl. ne thyn entente for truste  
wel that comunly thysse counceyl  
lours ben flaterers namelly the coun  
ceyllours of grete lordes. For they  
enforce them alway rather to speke  
playsaunt wordes encyng to the  
lordes luste than wordes that ben tre  
we and prouffitable. And therefore  
men sayn that the riche man hath sel  
derwhan good counceyl but yf he ha  
ue it of hem self. And after that thou  
shalt considere thy frendes and thyn  
enmyes. & as touchyng thy frendes  
thou shalt consydere whiche of them  
ben moste trewe wysest. most sayth  
ful. oldest and most approued in coun  
ceylling. And of hem shalt thou aye  
thy counceyl as the caas requyret. I  
say first þ ye shal clepe to your coun  
ceyl your frendes þ ben trewe. For sa  
lamon saith right as the herte of a  
man desyret in sauour that is swete  
Right so the counceyl of trewe fren  
des yueth sweteness to the soule. He  
saith also there may no thyng to bee  
slyndred to a trewe frende. For certes  
gold ne syluer be not so moch worth  
as the good wyl as the trewe frende  
& eke he saith þ a trewe frende is a  
grete defense. who þ it spynndeth. cer

tes he spynndeth a grete tresour. than  
shal ye eke vnderstonde yf þ your tre  
we frendes ben discrete and wyse for  
the booke saith & ye alwey thy counceyl  
of them þ ben wyse & by this same re  
son shalle ye clepe to your counceyl of  
your frendes þ ben of age whiche þ  
haue seyn many thynges & ben ex  
pert in dyuerse thynges. & be approued  
in counceylling. for the booke saith in  
olde men is the sapience & in longe ti  
me that prudence and iulius sayth. þ  
grete thynges ben not ay accompyss  
shed by strength ne by dyspuryng of  
body. but by counceyl and by aucto  
ryte of persones and by science the  
whiche thre thynges ne be not feble by  
age. but certis they enforce and en  
crece day by day. And than shal ye  
kepe this for a generayl rewle firste  
shal ye clepe to your counceyl a fewe  
or your frendes that ben speryal for  
salamon saith Many a frende haue  
thou. but amonge a thousand chese  
the one be thy counceyllour. for alle  
be it so þ thou first telle thy counceyl  
to fewe. Thou maist after telle thy  
counceyl to mo folke yf it be nede. but  
solke alway þ thy counceyllours haue  
tho thre condicions þ I haue said be  
fore. þ is to saye that they be trewe.  
wyse & of olde experyence. And weyl  
not alway in euery nede by one coun  
ceyllour allone. for somtyme it beho  
ueth to be counceyllid by many. For  
salamon saith. saluacion of thynges  
is there wherebe many counceyllours

Now sithe I haue tolde you of  
whiche folke that ye shold bee coun  
ceyllid. Nowe wyl I telle whiche



counceyl ye shal eschewe. First ye shal eschewe the counceylling of folles. for Salamon sayth take noo counceyl of a fool for he ne can not counceyl but after his luste and his affection. The booke sayth that the properte of a fool is this. he troweth har me lyghtly of euery wyghte.

And lyghtly troweth al bounte in hym self. ye shal also eschewe the counceylling of flaterars suche as enforce hem rather to prayse your person by flaterye than to telle you the sothfastenes of thinges. wherfore Tullyus sayth. Amonge al the pestelences that ben in frenship the grettest is flaterye. And therfor it is more nede to eschewe and drede flaterers than ony other peple. The booke sayth thou shalt rather fle drede the swete wordes of flaterers. and prayfers than the grete wordes of thy frende þ sayth to the thy sothes. Salamon sayth that the wordes of a flaterer. is a snare to catche Innocentes he sayth also he that sayth to his frende wordes of swetnes and of pleyssaunce setteth a nette before his feet to catche hym and therfore saith tullyus Enclayne not thyng eres to flaterers ne take no counceyl of wordes of flaterie And caton sayth auyse the wel to eschewe wordes of flaterye. of swetnes and of pleyssaunce. And elze thou shalt eschewe the counceylling of thyng olde enemyes that ben recounceyled The booke sayth that no wyght retorneth in to the grace of his olde enemy as saufly. And ysoppe sayth Ne truste not to them wyth whom thou hast

had warre or enemyte. ne telle not he thy counceyl. And senclie telleth the cause why it may not be and sayth where as a grete fyre hath long tyme endured. that there ne dwelleth some vapour of warmnes. And therfore sayth salamon. In thyng olde foo truste thou neuer for truly though thyng enemye be recounceyled and maketh the chere of humylyte and louteth to the wyth his hede. ne truste hym neuer the more. for silyerly he maketh that feyned humylyte more for his owen prouffyt than for the loue of thyng owen persone. by cause he demeth the to haue victorie ouer his persone by suche fayned contenaunce. The whiche victorie he myght not haue by strif newarre Peter alfons sayth make no felaschship with thyng olde enemyes for yf thou do thyng wyl puer ten it to wickrednes. and elze thou must eschewe the counceyl of such þ ben thyng seruantes and beryn the grete reuerence. forpauenturethey saye more for drede than for loue. and therfor sayth a philosophre in this wyse. Ther is no wight pfightly trewe to hym þ he sore dredeth. and tullyus sayth there is noo wight so grete as an emperour that long may endure but yf he hane more loue of his peple than drede. Thou shalt eschewe the counceyl of folle þ be donlysewe for they can not counceyl hyde. for Salamon sayth there is no pruyte where as repugneth dyshonour. ye shal alwaye haue in suspecte suche folle as counceylle you ony thyng pruely and counceylle you the contratyte openly.



Cassiodore saith that it is a maner slepyght to hyndre whan a man sheweth to do one thing openly & wyrteth the contrarie piously. Thou shalt also haue in suspect the counceylling of wyched folkie. For the booke sayth that the counceyl of wyched folkie is alle waye ful of frau de. And dauid sayth. That blyssful is þe man that hath not folowed the counceyl of wyched folkie. Thou shalt also eschewe the counceylling of yong folkie for her counceyl it not rype.

**D**w syre syth I haue shewen wed yow alle this of whiche folkie ye shal take your counceyl and of whiche folkie ye shal eschewe thei counceyl. Now wol I telle you how ye shal exampne your counceyl. After the doctryne of Tullius in exampnyng than of youre counceyllours. ye shal considere many thynges. Alderfirst thou shalt consydere. that in that thyng that thou art purposed and vpon what thyng thou shal haue counceyl that veray trouthe be sayd and conserued. This is to saie. telle al truly thy tale.

For he that sayth fals. may not well be counceyllid in þeas of the whiche he lyeth. And after this consydere thre thynges that accorde to that thou purposyst the first for to do by thy counceyllours yf reson accorde therto. And also yf thy myght may atteyne therto. And yf the more parte and the better parte of thy counceyllours accorde therto or no. Than shalt thou consydere what thyng shal so

lowe of that counceylling as hate. pees. warre. grace. prouffyt. or damage. and many other thynges. And of al these thynges thou shalt consydere of what rote is engendryd the mater of thy counceyl & what fruct it may concerne & engendryn. Thou shalt consydere also alle the causes from whens they be sprongen. And whan ye haue exampned your counceyl as I haue said & whiche parte is the better and more prouffitable and haue approued by many wyse folkie and othe. Than shalt thou consydere yf thou may performe it & make of hit a good ende for reson wolde not that ony man shold begynne a thing but yf he myght perfourme it as hym oughte. ne no man shold take on hym so heuy a charge that he myght not bere it. For the prouerbe saith he þe to moche enbracheth distreyneth lypyl. And caton sayth also assaye to doo suche thynges as thou hast power to do. on lesse þe charge oppresse the tofore. And that the behoueth to weye that thyng that thou hast begon ne. & yf that thou be in doubte whether thou may perfourme hit or not. These rather to suffre than to begynne. And peter alsons sayth. yf thou haste myght to doo a thyng whiche thou must repete. it is better nay than ye. This is to saie that it is better to holde thy tonge styll than for to speken. Than maist thou vnderstonde by stronger resons. þe yf thou hast power to pforme a werk. the which thou shalt repete. than it is better that thou suffre than begynne.



Syn they that defenden every wyght  
to assaye a thing of the whiche he is  
in doubte. whether he may performe  
it or noo. And after whan ye haue  
examyned your counceyl as I haue  
sayd beforne & knowe wel that ye  
may performe your empryse. confer  
me it than sadly til it be at an ende.

Now it is reson sayd she &  
n tyme that I shewe you whā  
and wherfore that ye may  
chaunge your counceyllours with  
outen reproof. Sothly a man may  
chaunge his counceyl or his purpos  
yf the cause cesseth or whan an other  
cause begynneth for the lawe vpon  
things that newly betyde behoueth  
newe counceyl. And Seneca saith yf  
that thy counceyl come to the eres of  
wicked men thyn enemyes chaunge  
thy counceyl. thou mayst also chaū  
ge thy counceyl yf so be that ther bee  
errour or thou fynd ony other cause  
harne or domynage may betyde.

Also yf thy counceyl be dishonest or  
ellis cometh of dishonest cause chaū  
ge thy counceyl. For the lawe sayth  
that al behestes that been dyspshonest  
ben of no valwe. And elze yf so be h  
it be Impossyble or may not goodly  
be performed or kept. take this for a  
general rewle that every counceyl h  
is affirmed so strongly that it may  
not be chaunged for no condicion h  
may betyde I saye that yllie counceyl  
is wicked.

His mellebeus whā he herd  
t the doctrine of his wyf da  
me prudence he answered in

this wyse. Dame sayd he as yet in  
to this tyme ye haue couenably tau  
ght me as in general now I shal go  
uerne me in chespyng & wythhol dyng  
of my counceyllours But now wol d  
I sayn that ye wolde condescende es  
pecial & telle me how lyeth or what  
semeth you by your counceyllours h  
we haue chosen in our present nedes.

y lord sayd she I beseeche  
m you in alle humbleste that  
ye wyl not wyllfully replie  
ayenst my reson. ne distempre poure  
herte though I speke thing that you  
displese for god wote that is not min  
entente. I speke it for your beste. for  
your honour & profit elze And sothli  
I hope that your benygnyte wyl ta  
ke it i pacione. that your counceyl as  
in this cas ne shold not as to spe  
ke properly be callyd a counceylling  
But a monycion or a meuyng folpe  
in whiche counceyl ye haue erryd in  
thassemblyng of your counceyllours  
For ye shold first haue clepyd a fe  
we folk to your counceyl. & after h  
ye myght haue shewed it to moo fol  
ke yf it had be nede. But certes ye  
haue sodenly cleped to your counceyl  
a grete multitude of peple ful char  
geant and ful anoyous for to here

And ye haue erryd for there as  
ye sholde haue cleped to your coun  
ceylle poure trewe frendes olde and  
wyse. ye haue cleped straunge  
folk. fals and flaterars and ene  
myes recounceyllid and folk. that  
doon now reuerence wythout loue.



## The Tale of Chauncer

And also ye haue erryd for ye haue brought wyth you pre. couetyse and hastynes. the whiche thre thinges be contraryous to euery honest counceyl & proffitable. & whiche thre thinges ye haue not amenuised ne destroyed nether in your self ne in your counceylours as ye ought ye haue erryd also for ye haue shewed to your counceylours your talent & your affection to make warre anon and for to doo vengeance. They haue aspyed by your menyng to what thyng ye be enclyned. & therfor haue they counceylled you rather to your talent than to your prouffite. ye haue erryd also for you seyneth that it suffyseth you to haue be counceylled by thysse counceylours only & wyth lytyl a dysse. Where as in so grete nede & so hys hit had be necessarye mo counceylours And more deliberacion to performe your emprise. ye haue erryd also for ye haue not examyned your counceyl in the forsayd mater ne in dewe manere as the caas requireth. ye haue erryd for ye haue made no dyspucion byt wyth your counceylours. This is to saye Bytweene your frendes & your feyned counceylours ne ye haue not knowe the wyll of your frendes olde & wyse. But ye haue cast alle her wordes in an hutchepot. & enclyned your herte to the more parte & to the gretter nombre & by þow condescended And also ye wote wel that men shul alway fynde a gretter parte of nombre of foolles than of wyse men. And therfore the counceylles þe been at congregacions & multitude

of folke there as men taken more rewarde to the nombre than to the sapience of persones. ye see wel þe in suche counceyllinges folles haue the masterye.

Ellebeus answerde agayn

m I graunte wel I haue erryd

But there as thou hast tolde me here befor þe he is not to blame that chaungeth his counceyl in certayn caas & for certayn Just causes I am alle redy to chaunge my counceylours right as thou list & as thou wylt deuyse. the prouerbe sayth þe for to doo synne is mannysshe. But certes for to pseuere long in synne it is a werke of the deuyl.

This sentence answerd dazet me prudence & said examyne your counceyl & lete vs se whiche of them haue spoliyn most resonable & taught you best counceyl & for as moche as the examinacion is necessarye late vs begyn at surgens & at physiciens þe first speken in this matere. I say you þe the surgens & the phisiciens haue said you discretly as they ought. for they said ful wysely þe to the office of hem hit appertayneth to do to euery wyght honour & prouffit & no wyght to ennoye. & after they craft do grete diligēce vnto the cure of hem the whiche they haue in gouernance. & fyr right as they haue answered wysely & discretely. right so I rede you þe þe be hyghly & souverainly gwerdonned for her noble speche. & eke for they shold do the more entetif besynes in the curacion of youre daughter. for alle be it so þe they be your frendes Therfor shal ye not suffre þe they shal serue you for nought



But ye ought to gouerne hem & she we hem largesse. And as touchyng that the physiciens encresyd in thys cas that is to say þ in maladies one contrarpe is warpysshed by another contrarpe I wold sayn knowe how ye vnderstonde that teyte & what is your sentence. Certes sayd mellebeus I vnderstonde that in this wyse. That right as they haue doon me a contrarpous right. ryght so shold I do hem another. for right as they haue venged hem on me & doon me wronge. right so shold I venge me on hem & do hem wronge and than haue I cured one contrarpe by another contrarpe. Lo said dame prudence how lightly is euery mā enclyned to do his owen desir & his owen plesāce. ctes said she the wordes of þ physiciens shold not be vnderstode in this wyse for certes wyckednes is not contrarious to wyckednes. ne vengeance to vengeance no wrong to wrong but eueryche of them encrespyth & aggreth with other. But certes the wordes of the physiciens shold be vnderstonde i this wise. for good & wyckednes be two contrarpous. and pees & warre. vengeance & suffrance and discorde. & accorde. and many other thinges. But certes wyckednesse shal be warpysshed by goodnes. And discorde by accorde. & warre by pees. & so forth by other thinges. & herto accordeth seint Poule thapostle in many places. He saith yelden of harme to harme ne wycked speche to wycked speche but do wel to hym that doth the harme and blyffe hym that saith the harme.

And in many other places he saith & amonesteth pees and accorde. But now wold I speke to you of the counceyl whiche þ was yene to you by the men of lawe and wyse folke that saiden alle by one accorde as ye haue herde. that ouer all thinges ye shold doo diligence to kepe your persone & to warnstore your hous. And sayden also þ in this cas ye ought for to werke ful aduysedly & wyth grete discretion & deliberacon. And spre as to the first poynte that toucheth the keepyng of your person ye shal vnderstonde that he þ hath warre. Shalle euermore deuoutly & mekely besekyn & prayen before alle thinges. Ihesu cryste of his mercy þ he wol haue hym in his protection & be his souerayn helper at his nede. for certes in thys werke there is no wyght that may be counceylled ne kepte sufficiently wythout the keepyng of our lord Ihesu cryste. To this entente accordeth the prophete dauid þ saith yf god ne kepe the Lyte. in ydel walketh he that keepeth it. Now spre than shul ye commyte the keepyng of your persone to you trewe frendes that ben y prouyd and knowen. And of them shall ye aye helpe your persone to kepe. for Laton saith yf thou haue nede of helpe aye it of thi frende. And after this than shalle ye kepe you from al straunge folkis & fro lvers and haue alleway in suspecte her companye. For Peter alfons sayth ne take no companye by the waye of stranger men.



But yf it so be þ thou haue knowen hem before tyme And yf so be that ye haue not knowen hem. And wyl nedes fal in thy compaigne perauentre wythout thy assente. enquire then as subtilly as thou canst or mayst of his conuersacion ⁊ of his lyf before. And sayne thy way ⁊ say that thou wolt go thyder as thou wolt not go And yf he bere a spere holde the on the right syde. And yf he bere a swerde holde the lyste syde And after thus than shal ye lrepe yow wysely from al suche maner peple as I haue said before ⁊ hem and her counceyl esche we. And after this than shal ye lrepe yow in suche maner þ for ony presumpcion of your strengthe. that ye despise ne attempte not the might of your aduersarye. And thus beware þ ye lette not the lrepyng of your persone for ony presumption. For euery wyse man dredeth his enemye. And salomon sayth wylful is he þ of noo thing hath drede. For certes he that thorough the hardynes of his herte or of hym self hath to grete presumpcion hym shal euyl betyde. than shal yow cuer more contrewayte enbusshementis in speciall. For senekle sayth the wyse mā that dredeth harmes esche we. harmes ne he fallith no peill þ perille eschewith. ⁊ al be it so þ thou se me þ thou be in silyer place. yet shalt thou do al way dyslygence in lrepyng of thy persone not only from thy gretest enemyes but from the leste enemye: Dwyde sayth that the lypyl weys wold sle a grete bolle ⁊ the grete herte. And the booke sayth. That a ly

tyl thorne may prycke the lrynge sulfore. And an hounde wyl sle the wylle bore but neuertheles I saye not that thou shalt be so cowarde that thou doubte. where as is no drede. The booke sayth that som folle haue grete lust to desceyue but yet they dreden hem to be desceyued. thou shalt drede to be enpoysoned. and lrepe the from the compaigne of scorners. For the booke sayth scornes make no compaigne. But flee her wordes as benyyn. Now as to the secounde poynt where as your wyse counceylours concepled yow to warnstoure your hous wyth grete dyslygence. I wold sayn knowe how that ye vnderstonde the wordes ⁊ what is the sentence. Wellebeus answerd ⁊ sayd Certes I vnderstonde it in this wyse that I shalle warnstoure my hous wyth toures suche as be castellys ⁊ other maner edyfices wyth armure and other maner attylerye by suche thinges whiche I may my persone ⁊ my hous so desede þ my enemyes shal be in drede my hous for to approche.

W this sentence answerde a non prudence. warnstouryng sayth she of grete towres ⁊ edyfices wyth grete costages ⁊ grete trauayll. And whan that they be accomplysshed yet be they not worth a strawe. But yf they ben defended by trewe frendes that ben olde and wyse. And vnderstonde wel that the gretest and strongest garyson that a rich man may haue as well to lrepe his persone as his good. is that he be belouyd wyth his subgettys and



For thus saith tulus<sup>9</sup> þ there is a maner garison þ no mā may vainquisshē ne discōfite. ⁊ þ is a lord to be betroupd of his cyteseyns ⁊ of his peple. Now sʒr as to your thirde popnt where as your wyse ⁊ olde counceylours sayd þ ye ne ought not sodenli ne hastely to procede in this nede but þ ye oughten to purueye ⁊ apparaylen in this caas wyth grete diligence ⁊ grete deliberacion truly I trowe they sayden right wysely ⁊ right so. h For tulus<sup>9</sup> saith in euery nede er thou begynne yet apparayl the wyth grete diligence thā in Vengeāce takynge in warre in bataile ⁊ i warnstoring er thou begynne I rede þ thou apparayle the therto ⁊ do it wyth grete deliberacion For tulus<sup>9</sup> saith þ long apparayling before the bateyl maketh short victorie And casspodie saith þ the garyson is the stronger whan it is longe tyme aduysed But now late vs speke of the counceyl þ was accorded by your neyghebouris suche as don you reuerence wythouten loue. your olde enemyes recounspired. your flaterers þ counceyl you certayn thinges openly. And pruely counceyl you the contrarie. The yong folke þ counceylle you to auenge you ⁊ make warre anon. Certes sʒr as I haue sayde before. ye haue gretely errid to haue cleped suche maner of folke to your counceyl. which counceylours ben ynough repleuyd aforesayd by reason. But neuertheles late vs nou descende to the specyall. ye shal first procede after the doctrine of tulus. Certes the trouthe of this matere or

of this counceyl nedeth not dyligently tenquyre. For it is wyf witt whiche they be þ haue don to you this trespass ⁊ bylonye and how many trespassours. ⁊ in what maner þ they haue do to you alle this wronge ⁊ alle this bylonye. And after this shal ye examyne the s. cond condicion. whiche þ the same tulus addeth in this same mater. For Tulus putteth a thing whiche þ he calleth cōsenting. this is to say who ben they ⁊ whiche be they ⁊ how many consenting to this counceyl in thy wylfulnes to doo hasty vengeāce. And lete cōsider. also who be they ⁊ how many be they þ cōsenteden to your aduersaries. ⁊ reites as to the first popnt it is well knownen whiche folke they be that cōsented to your hasty wylfulnes. For certes alle tho that counceylled you to make sodeyn warre be not your frendes Lete vs now consydere whiche be they þ ye holde so gretely your frendes as to your persone. For al be it so þ ye be so myghty ⁊ riche Certes ye be but allone. For ye haue no child but a daughter. Ne ye haue noo brethern ne cosyns Germans ne noo ne other nyghe kynrede. wherfor þ your enemyes for drede sholde stynte to plete with you or distroyen your persone. ye know also þ your ryches must be despended in dyuerse parties ⁊ whan þ euery wyght hath hys parte they ne wyl take but ltyl reward to venge your deeth. But your enemies ben thre and they haue many chyldren. Brethern



Cosyns. And other nyghe lynrede. And though so were that thou haddest slayn two or thre of them. yet dwellen there ynough to wreken her deth and to see thy persone. And though so be that youre lynrede be more splier and stedfast than the lynrede of your aduersaryes. yet neuer theles youre lynrede nys but after lynrede they be but lytyl subget to you. And the lynrede of youre enemyes ben nyghe sybbe to them. And certes as in that her condycion is better than yours. Than lete us considere also yf that the counceyl of hem that conseil you to take sodeyn Begeaunce wheter it accord to reson or noo. And certes ye know wel nay for as be right or reason there may no man take vengeance on no wyght but the Juge that hath the Jurisdiction of it. whan it is graunted hym to take that vengeance hastily or at temperatly as the lawe requireth. And yet more ouer of that word that Tullyus sayth and crieþ cōcentyng thou shalt consydere yf thy myght & thy power may consente and suffyse to thy wyylfulnes and to thy counceylsours. & ctes thou maist wel say nay for slyerly as for to speke properly we may doo no thing but only suche thinges as we may do rightfully. And certes thou mayst rightfully take vengeance. as of your propre auctorite. Than may ye se that your power ne consenteth ne accordeth your wyylfulnes. Lete us examyne the thyrd poynt that tullyus clepeth con-

sequent. thou vnderstonde þ the vengeance that thou purposest to take is consequent. And therfor foloweth a nother vengeance peryl and warre and other dommages wythout nō bre of whiche we be not warre as at this tyme. and as touchyng the fourthe parte þ tullyus clepeth engendring Thou shalt consydere þ this wrong whiche is don to the. is engendryd of the hate of thy enemyes & of vengeance takyng vpon hem that wold engendre a nother vengeance & moche sorowe and wasyng of riches as I sayd before. Now syre as to the fyfthe poynt. whiche that tullyus clepeth causes which is the last point thou shalt vnderstonde þ ille wrong that thou hast receyued hath certain causes whiche that clerkes clepen or ryens and effyience & causa longinqua and causa proppinqua. This is to saye the fer cause & the nygh cause. The fer cause is alle myghty god þ is cause of alle thynges. The neer cause is thy thre enemyes. The cause acydental was hate. The cause materpalle is the spue woundes of thy doughter. The cause formal is the cause of her worschyng þ brougten ladders and clomben in at the wyndowes. These cause synal was to sle thy doughter it letted not in as moche as in hem was. But for to speke of this synall cause as what ende they shal come or what shal synally betyde of hem in this caas. Ne can I not deme but by comectyng & supposyng for we shal suppose that



they shal come to a wycked ende. By  
cause that the boke of the decrees saith  
Sede or wyth grete payn be causes  
brought to a good ende. whan they  
be bodily begonne. Now syre yf men  
wold aye me why that god suffreth  
men to do this Bylonye certes I can  
not wel answer as for no sothfastnes  
for thapostle sayth. That the scienc  
ce and the Jugementys of our lord  
god almyghty been fuldepe. There  
may no man comprehend ne serche  
hem suffciently. Neuertheles by cer  
tain presumptuous & coniectyng I  
holde and beleue that wyght that is  
ful of Justice and rightfulness hath  
suffryd this to betyde by Just cause  
& resonable. Thy name is mellebee.  
This is to saye a mā that drynketh  
hony. thou hast dronke so moche ho  
ny of swete temporel riches and desy  
res of honour of this worlde þ thou  
art dronke & hast forgotten Ihu crist  
thy creatour. Thow ne hast doon to  
hym suche honour and reuerence as  
thow oughtest. Ne thou ne hast take  
hepe of the wordes of Dydde þ saith  
Under the hony of the goodes of the  
body is hyd venym that sleth the sou  
le. And salamon saith yf thou hast  
founde hony ete of it that suffyseth.  
For yf thou ete of it out of mesure.  
thou shalt spewe. and be nedye and  
poure. and parauenture Crist hath  
the in de spyte. & hath torneth a way  
fro the his face and his misericorde.  
And so he hath suffrid that thou hast  
be punysshed in the maner that how  
hast trespassed. Thow hast don syn  
ne agayn our lord Ihesu criste. For

certes the thre enemyes of manlyne  
de that is to saye the fleesshe the fende  
and the world thou hast suffryd hem  
for to entre in to the herte wylfullye  
by the wyndowes of thy body. And  
hast not defendeth thy self suffcient  
ly agaynst her assautes & her temp  
tacions. so that they haue wounded  
the soule in fyue places that is to sa  
ye the dedely synnes that been entred  
in to thy herte be the fyue wyttys.  
And in this maner our lord ihu crist  
hath suffred that thy thre enemyes be  
entryd in to thy hous by the wyndo  
wes. And haue wounded thy dough  
ter in the maner asofsayd.

Certes sayd Mellebee I see  
c wel þ yf enforce yow my  
lyl by wordes to ouerco  
me me in suche maner as I shal not  
venge me of myn enemyes. shewyng  
methe peryl & the euyl that myght be  
falle of this vengeaunce. But who  
so wold consydere in alle vengeaun  
ces the peril and the euyl that myght  
sewe of vengeaunce takyng a man  
wold neuer take vengeaunce and þ  
were harme for by vengeaunce ta  
kyng ben wycked men dessuerd fro  
the good men. And they that haue  
wyl to do wyckednes restreyne her  
wycked purpoos whan they see the  
punysshyng and the chastysyng of the  
trespassours And yet saye I more. þ  
right as by synfuler presumpeyon  
he synneth in takyng vengeaunce of  
a nother man Right soo synneth the  
Juge yf he take not & doo vengean  
ce on hem that it haue deseruid.



Seneker saith thus. That mayster is good he sayth that repreueth shrewes. And casspodre sayth a man die deth to doo outragpously whan he woot and knoweth that it dyspleseth the Iuges and soueraynes. and another sayth The Iuge that dredeth to doo right maketh shrewes. a saint poule thapostle sayth how he wryteth to the romayns that the Iuges bere not the spere wythout cause. But they bere it to ponysshe the shrewes and mysdoers. And for to defenden the good men. yf ye wyl take vengeance on your enmyes ye shall retourne and haue your cours to the Iuge that hath the Iurysdiction vpon hem and ye shal punyssh hem as the lawe ayed a requyeth.

Sayd Eliebe this vengeance lyketh me no thyng.

I bethynke me now a tale he hede how that fortune hath norisshyd me fro my chyldhode and holpe me to passe many a straunge paas. Now wol I assaye in her trowynge wyth goddes helpe that shal me saue for to venge. certes sayd prudence yf ye wyl werke by my couceyl ye shal not assaye fortune by no wape. ne ye shalle not lene ne borwe vnto her after the worde of seneker. for thynges that ben folyly don and that bee doon in hope of fortune shall neuer come to good ende. And as to the same seneker sayth the more clere and the more shynyng that fortune is. the more brotyl. and the sonner broken she is.

Truste ye

not in her. for there nys no stedfastnes ne stablenes in her. for whan thou trowest to be moste sure and sykter of her. She wyl faylle and deceyue the. And where as ye sayn þ fortune hath norysshyd you in your childhood. I say that there is so mykyl the lasse truste in your witte. for seneker sayth what man that is norysshyd by fortune she makyth hym a fool. Now sythen ye despyren a vengeance. And the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and before the Iuge lyketh not now. And the vengeance that is doon in hope of fortune is perylous and vncertayn. than haue ye no remedye but for to haue your recours vnto the souerayn Iuge that vengeyth al vylonys a wronges. and he shal venge you after þ hym self wyneffeth wher as he saith. leue ye the vengeance vnto me and I shalle do hit.

Eliebe answerd yf I venge me not of the vylonys þ men haue don vnto me I sommonne and warne hem that haue don to me this vylonys and al oþer to doo me vylonys. for it is wryton yf thou takest no vengeance of a old vylonys. thou somonest thy aduersarye to do the a newe vylonys. Also for my suffraunce men wolde doo me so grete vylonys þ I myght not bere it ne sytne it. a than shold I be put a holde ouer lowe. for men sayn in mykyl suffring shal many thynges falle vnto the whiche thou ne shal now suffre.



and Jugement & in the myght and power of his enemyes. For salamoſ sayth Belue me and geue credence to that I ſhal ſaye. ne geue neuer the power ne gouernaunce of thy gooddes. to the ſone. to thy wyf. to thy frende ne to thy broder. ne geue thou myght ne mayſtrye ouer thy body whi leſt thou lyueſt. Now ſyth that he defendeth that a man ſhold not geue to his broder ne to his frende the myght of his body by a ſtrenger reſon he defendeth a man to geue hym to his enemye And neuertheles I coulde cept you ſhuld ye myſtruſt not my lord. For I wote wel and knowe verreyly that he is debonaire. meke. large and curteis and nothyng deſprouis ne couetous of good ne riches. For ther is no thyng in this worlde but he deſpyreth more than worſhip and honour.

Forthermore I knowe and am full ſure that he nothyng ſhal doo in this dede wythout my counceyl. And I ſhal ſo werke in this caſ that by the grace of our lord god ye ſhal be recounceyllid vnto vs. Than ſayd they wyth one voys. worſhipful lady we put vs & our goodes in youre wyll and diſpoſicion alle fully. And be redy for to come what day that it lyke to your nobleſſe to aſſygne vs for to make our obligations & bondes alſo ſtronge as it ſhal lyke vnto your goodnes that we mowe fulfylle the wyll of pow & of my lord Wellesbee. whan dame prudence had herd the answers of theſe men. She bad hem retorne pryncely. And ſhe retourned agayn to her lord wellesbee & tolde

de hym how ſhe ſonde his aduerſaryes ful repentant knowlechynge ful lowly her ſynnes and treſpaas and how that they were redy to ſuffre all payne requyrynge hym of mercy and pyte. Than ſayd wellesbee he is well worthy to haue pardon and forpeneues that excuſeth hym not of his ſynne. But knowlecheth and repenteth hym ayyng Indulgence for his ſynne. Senek ſayth There is the remedyſſyon and forpeneues. For the confeſſion is nyghbour to Innocence. And therfor I aſſente and confor me to haue pees. But it is good that we doo not wythout the wyll of oure frendes.

Than was Prudence ryght glad & Joyeful and ſayde certes ſyre ye haue wel and goodly answered. For right as by the counceyl aſſente & helpe of youre frendes ye haue ſtyrd to doo venge you and make warre ryght ſo wythouten her counceyl ſhal ye not acorde you ne haue pees wyth youre aduerſaries. For the lawe ſayth there is no thyng ſoo good by waye of kynde as a thyng to be vnboude by hym that it was boude. And than dame Prudence wythout delaye or taryng ſent anon her meſſagers for her kyn and her olde frendes whiche were trewe and wyſe. And tolde hem by ordre in preſence of wellesbee al this mater as is aboue expreſſyd and declared. And prayed hem that they wolde ſaye her aduys and counceylle what were beſte to doo in this nede. And whan



We thynke and consydere þ we haue deserued to haue them. & saynt Gregory sayth. that whan a man consydereth wel the nombre of his defaultes and synnes. the paynes and tribulacions that he suffreth semen the lasse to hym. & in as moche as hym thynketh his synnes more heuy and greuous in so moche semeth his payne more lyghter and esyer to hym.

Also ye oughten to enclpne and bo: we your herte to take the pacience of our lord Ihu cryste as sayth saynt Peter in his eppistles. Ihesu Cryste he sayth that suffred for vs and paf ensample to euery man to folowe & sue hym. for he dyd neuer synne. He neuer cam ther out of his mouth by leynes worde: whan men cursid hym he cursed hem not. And whan men beten hym. he manasced hem not. al. so the grete pacience þ sayntes whiche that ben in paradyse haue had in tribulacions that they haue suffred wythouten her deserte or gylte ought moche styrre your pacience. For ye shold enforce yow to haue pacience.

Consydering the tribulacions of this world that lytyl whyle enduren and sone passyn and goon. and the Joye that a man seketh by pacience in tribulacions is perdurable. After that the Apocalyps sayth in his epistle. The ioye of god he sayth is perdurable last is to saue euerlastyng. also trowe ye wel and eke beleue stedfast ly that he is not wel norissyd ne a el taught that wyl not haue pacience. ne wyl not receyue pacience. for sa

lemen sayth That the doctryne of a man and the wytte is knowen by pacience. And in another place he sayth þ he that is pacyet gouerneth hym by grete in prudence. & the same Salamon sayth The angry and the wrathfulman maketh noyses. And the patient man atempteth hym & stylleth hym. he sayth also. it is more worth to be patient thennefor to be right stronge. And he that may haue the lordship of his owen hert is more to prayse than by his force or stene: the taketh grete cytees. And therfore saith saint Jame in his epistle That pacience is a grete vertue of perfection. Certes sayd Wellebec I graunte dame Prudence that pacience is a grete vertu of perfection.

But euery man may not haue the perfection that ye seke. ne I am none of þ nombre of right perfight men. For my herte may neuer be in pees vnto the tyme that it be vengyd & al be it soo that it was grete peryl to myn enemies to doo me a bylonye in takyng vengeance vpon me: yet toke they no hede of the paryl but suffylled their wycked wyl and corage.

And therfor me thinketh men ought not to repreue me. though I put me in a lytyl paryl for to venge me.

And though I do a grete expresse.

That is to saue that I a venge one outrage by a nother.

Sayde dame prudence ye  
a say your wysse as you lyketh  
keth But in no caas of the



world of a man shold not do outrage ne epyesse for to venge hym. For casspodre saith that as euyl doth he that avengeth hym by outrage as he that doth the outrage. And therfor ye shal venge yow after the ordie of right. þ is to say by the lawe, and not by epyesse ne by outrage and also if ye wil venge yow of the outrage of youre aduersaries in other maner. ye sunne. and therfor sayth seneke þ a mā shal neuen vengesshrednes by shrednes and yf that ye save that right ayed a man to defende bypolence by bypolence. and fyghtyng by fyghtyng. Lertes ye saith soth. whan the defence is doon anon wythouten interual or wythouten taryng or delay for to defende hym and not for to venge hym. And yet behoueth that a man put suche temperaunce in his defence that men haue no cause ne mater to reproche hym that defendeth hym of outrage or epyesse. For ellys were it agayn reson. Forde ye knowe wel that ye make no defence as nou for to defende yow. But for to venge yow. And so sueth it that ye haue no wyl to do your wyl attemptatly. And therfor me thynketh that patience is good. For salamon sayth. þ he that is not patient shal haue grete harme.

Ertes said mellebe I graunte yow whan a man is impatient and wroth of that whiche touched hym not and that apperteyneth not to hym. though it harme hym it is no wonder. For the lawe saith that he is culpable that enterneth or medleth of thyng that

apperteyneth not to hym. And salamon saith. That he that enterneth hym of the noyse of stryf of another man. Is lyke to hym that taketh a strange hound by the eeres. For right as he that taketh a strange hound by the eeres. he is otherwhyle biten with the hound. Ryght in the same wyse. it is reson that he haue harme that by his Inpacience medlyth hym of the noyse of another mā where as it apperteyneth not to hym. But ye knowe wel that this dede that is to say my grief and my desire toucheth me ryght nygh. and therefore though I be wrothe and Inpatient it is noon metuayl. And sayyng your grace I can not see that I shold gretely harme me though I toke vengeance. For I am riche and more myghty than myn enemyes ben and it is wel known that by money and hauyng grete poyssouns ben al thynges of this world gouerned. And also salamon sayth that alle thyse thynges obeyen to money. whan prudence had herde her husband a daunte hym of his riches and of his money dyspraying the power of his enemyes she spak and sayd in this wyse. certes dere syr I graunte yow that ye be riche and myghty. And that riches ben good to hem that haue gotten hem wel and that wel can vse them. for ryght as the body of a man may not lyue without the soule. nomore may the lyf without temporel goodes And by riches may a man gete hym grete frendes. and therefore sayth pamphylles yf an erles doughter be ryche he



sayth she may these of a thousand men whom she wyl take to her husband. For of a thousand men one wyl not forsake her. And this pamphyles sayth also. yf that thou be ryght happy that is to saye yf thou be ryche thou shalt fynde a grete nombre of felawes and frendes. And yf thy fortune chaunge farewell frenship and felawship for thou shalt be alone wythout ony companye. but yf it be the companye of poure folke. & yet saith this pamphyles more ouer that they that ben bonde and thrall of synage shal be made worthy and noble by riches. And right so as by rycheffe there comen many goodes. right so by pouerte there comen many harmes and euyllys. And therfore clepeth casspodre pouerte the moder of rupne that is to saye the moder of ouerthrowyng or of fallyng down. And therfore sayth Peter alfons one of the gretest aduersaryes of this world is whan a freman of kynde or of byrthe is constrayned by pouerte to ete the almesse of his enemye. And the same sayth Innocence in one of his bookes that sorowful and myshappy is the condycion of a poure beggar. For yf he aye not his meete. he dyeth for houngre & yf he aye he dyeth for shame. and algate necessitye constreyneth hym to aye. And therfore sayth salamon That better it is to dye than to haue suche pouerte. And as the same Salamon sayth better it is to dye a bytter deth than to lyue suche a lyf. By these reasons þ

I haue sayd vnto you and by many other that I coude say I graunte that riches ben good to them that gete hem wel and to tho that vse wel this rycheffe. And therfor wyl I shewe you. how ye shal behaue you in gadryng of your riches. & in what maner ye shal vse them. fyrst ye shal gete hem wythouten grete desyre by good leyzer so kyngly and not ouer hastely. for a man that is to desyryng in getyng ryches haboundeth hym first to theste and to alle other mysfrewles. And therfor sayth salamon he that hasteth hym to besily to waye riche he shal be none Innocent he sayth also that the riches that hastily cometh to a man. soon and hastily goth and passeth from a man. But that riches that cometh lytyl & lytyl weyit alway and myltyplyeth. And therfor ye shalle gete ryches by your wytte and by your traueyl vnto your prouffyt. And that wythouten wrong or harme doyng to ony other persone. For the lawe saith ther maketh no man hym self riche yf he doo harme to another wyght. This is to saye that nature defendeth and forbedeth by ryght that no man make hym riche vnto the harme of another persone. And tullyus sayth that no sorowe ne dred of dethe ne of thynge that may befall vnto a man is so moche agayn nature as a man to encrece his owen prouffyt to the harme of another man. & though þ grete and myghty men gofe ryches more lyghtly than thou. yet shalt thou



alle wyse fle ydlenes For salamon  
sayth That he that traueleth in ydle-  
nes tetched a man to doo many euyl-  
les. And the same salamon sayth. he  
that traueyleth and bespeth hym to  
tylle his lond shal ete brede. And he  
that is ydle and casteth hym to noo  
besynes ne occupacion shal falle in  
to pouerte & dye for hungere And he þ  
is ydle & slowe can neuer fynde coue-  
nable tyme for to doo his prouffyt.  
For ther is a versenpar sayth. that the  
ydle man excuseth hym in wynter  
by cause of the grete colde & in som-  
mer by encheson of hete. For thys  
causes sayth caton waketh & endy-  
neth pou not ouer myght to slepe.  
For ouer moche reke nor ysshith and  
causeth many byces. & therfor sayth  
Seynt Jerome doth some good de-  
des þ the deuyl whiche þ is your ene-  
mye fynd pou not vncupped. for  
the deuyl taketh not lyghtly to his  
worshyping suche as he fyndeth occupi-  
ed in good werke. Than thus in ge-  
tyng of riches pe must flee ydlenes  
And after ward pe shal vse the riches  
whiche pe haue gotten by your wytte  
& by your trayueyl in suche maner þ  
men hold pou not to scarce ne to spa-  
ryng ne to fool large that is to saye  
ouer large a spender. For right as  
men blame an auaricious man by  
cause of his scarsenes & chynerye. in  
the same wyse is he to blame þ spen-  
deth ouer largely. And therfor  
caton saith vse thy ryches that thou  
hast gotten in suche maner as men  
haue no mater ne cause to say ne cal

le the neyther wretche ne chynche. for  
it is a grete shame to a man to haue  
a poure herte & a riche purs. he saith  
also the goodes that thou hast gotten  
vse them by mesure þ is to say spend  
them mesurably for they that solyly  
spende & wasten the goodes that they  
haue. whan they haue nomore pro-  
prie of theyr owen. they shapen them  
to take the goodes of other me I say  
than that ye shal flee auarycie vsyng  
your rycheffe in suche maner that  
men saye not that your rycheffes is  
deuoured. But that ye haue them in  
your myght & in your weldyng. for  
the wyse man repreueth the auarici-  
ous man and sayth thus in two ver-  
sys. wherto and why burpeth a man  
his owen goodes by his grete auar-  
ycie & knoweth wel þ nedes must he die  
for deth is the ende of eueryman as  
in this present lyf. & for what cause &  
encheson Joyneþ or knyttheth he  
hym so fast to his godes þ al his wyt-  
tes mo we not deffeuere ne departe  
hym from his goodes. And knoweth  
wel or owght to knowe that whan  
he is dede he shal nothpyng bere wyth  
hym out of this world. And therfor  
sayth saint Augustyn. That the au-  
aricious man is lykened vnto helle.  
þ the more it swolowe the more hit de-  
syreth to swolowe and to deuoure.  
And as wel as pe wold eschew to be  
called an auaricious man or a chin-  
che as wel shold pe kepe pou & go-  
uerne pou in suche wyse that man  
not be ydle. But shewe to  
doo thy prouffyt. For thou shalt in



lepe þow not fool large.

Therfor sayth Tullyus the goodes  
be opened by pyte and by debonary-  
te that is to saye to geue hym parte þ  
haue grete nede. Ne thy goodes shold  
not be so open to be euery mannes  
goodes. Afterward in geting of your  
rychesse and vsing hem ye shal alle-  
way haue thre thinges in your herte  
That is to saye our lord god, goode  
consience, and god name. First ye  
shal haue god in your herte. And for  
no ryches ye shal doo no thyng whi-  
che may in ony maner wyse dysplesa  
god that is our creatour and maker.

After the word of Salamon, it is  
better to haue a lytyl good wyth the  
loue of god than for to haue moche  
golde and tresour and to lese the loue  
of his lord god. And the pphete saith  
that better it is to be a good man &  
haue lytyl good and tresour than to  
be holde a shewe and haue grete ry-  
chesse. And yet say I furthermore þ  
ye shal alway do your besynes to ge-  
te þow ryches so þ ye gete them wyth  
good consience. And the appostle  
sayth that there ys nothyng in this  
world of whiche we shal haue so gre-  
te Joye as whan our consience berith  
ys good wytnes. And the wyse man  
sayth that the substaunce of a man  
is ful good whan synne is not in  
mannes consience. Afterward in  
geting of your rychesse and in vsing  
of them ye must haue grete besynes  
and dysligence that your good name  
be alway kept and conserued. For  
Salamon sayth That better is and

more it auayleth a man for to haue  
a good name than for to haue ma-  
ny ryches. And therfor he saith in an-  
other place, doo grete dysligence in ke-  
pyng of thy frende and in keepyng  
of thy good name. For it shal lenger  
abyde wyth the than ony other tres-  
sour be it neuer so precious & certes  
he shold not be called a gentylman þ  
after god and good consience alle  
thinges lest he doth to kepe his good  
name. And Cassiodore sayth that hit  
is synne of a gentylle herte whan a  
man loueth and desyret to haue a  
good name. And therfore saith saint  
Augustyn, that ther be two thynges  
that be necessarye and nedeful, that  
is good consience and good loos.

And he that trusteth hym so myght  
in his good consience that he despy-  
seth and setteth at nought his good  
name or loos he doth not well.

For he that taketh not to kepe his  
good name nys but a cruel choile.

Spere now haue I shewed þow  
how ye shold do in getyng of ryches  
and how ye sholde vse hem.

And I see wel that for the trust that  
ye haue in your ryches ye wolde me-  
ue warre and bataylle. I counceylle  
þow that ye begyn no warre in trust  
of your riches. For they suffyse not  
warres to mayntene, & therfor sayth  
a phylosophre that man that desy-  
reth algate & wyl haue warre, shal  
neu haue suffysaunce for the ryche þ  
he is the gretter dyspence muste he  
of thyn hous he shold not be hyd ne  
kepte so cloos but that they myght



make yf he wyl haue worship and  
wyctorye. And salamon sayth That  
the grete ryches þa mā hath the more  
dyspence he hath And therfore al be  
it so that by fortune a ryches ye may  
haue many folke. yet behoueth it not  
ne it is not good to begynne warre.  
where that ye may haue in other ma  
ner pees vnto your worship a prouf  
fyt. for the victories that ben of ba  
taille in this world. ben not in grete  
nombre and multytude of people ne  
in vertu of man. But it lyeth in the  
wyl and in the hand of our lord ihū  
god almyghty. And therfor Judas  
machabe whiche that was goddes  
knyghte. whā he shold fyght agains  
te hys aduersaries that had a gret  
ter nombre and gretter multytude  
of people and stronger than was the  
peple of Machabee. yet he recomfor  
ted his lytyl peple and sayd ryght in  
this wyse. Also lyghtly sayd he may  
our lord god yue vyctorye to a fewe  
folke as to many folke. for the vic  
torie of a bataille cometh not by a gre  
te nombre of people but hit cometh  
from our lord god of heuen. And  
dere syt for as moche as there is noo  
man certayn that he be worthy that  
god wyl yue hym vyctorye or not.  
Salamon saith Therfor euery man  
shold gretely drede warrys to begyn  
ne and by cause that in bataille falle  
many perylls. And happeth other  
whyle þa also sone is a grete mā slain  
as a lytyl man And as is wyton in  
the second booke of kynges. The des  
des of bataille been venturous and

nothyng certayn. for as lyghtly as  
one hurte wyth a spere as a nother  
And forether is grete payn in warre  
therfor shold a man eschewe and fle  
warre in as mykel as a man may  
goodly. for salamon sayth he that  
louyth payn shal fauour payn: After  
that dame prudence had spoken in  
this mater Wellebee answerde and  
said I se wel dame prudence that by  
sayd wordes a by your resons that  
ye haue shewed me. that warre ly  
keth yow nothyng. but I haue not  
herde yet in this counceyle. how I  
shal doo in this nede. Certes sayde  
she I counceyl yow that ye accorde  
wyth your aduersaries that ye haue  
pees wyth them for saint iame saith  
in his epyistles. That by accorde and  
pees the smale ryches waye grete.  
And by debate and dyscorde the gre  
te richesse fallen down and fayllen.

And ye knowe wel that one of the  
greatest and most souerayn thyng þa  
is in this world is vyte a pees. and  
therfor sayth our lord ihū crist to  
his appostles in this wyse wel hap  
py and blyssid be tho that louen and  
purchasen pees. for they be called  
chylidren of god I sayd wellebee now  
see I wel þa ye loue not myn honoure  
ne worship. ye knowen that myn ad  
uersaries haue begonne this debate  
And ye see wel that they ne requyre  
ne praye me of pees ne they aye not  
to be reconceyled wold ye than that  
I goo a meke me a obeie me vnto  
hem a crye hem mercy forsothe þa we  
re not my worshyp. for ryght as



## The Tale of Chaucer

men sayn ouergrete hublences engen-  
deryth grete dyspraysynge so shold it  
fare by me in doyng this grete humi-  
lyte or mekenes. Than began pru-  
dence to make semblaunte of wrath  
and sayd fyr saue your grace. I lo-  
ue your honour & your prouffight  
as I doo myn owen and euer haue  
doo neyther ye ne none other sawe  
neuer the contrarpe. & yet yf I had  
sayd that ye sholde haue purchaced  
your pees and the recounsilacion I  
ne had my kynscaped ne sayd a-  
mys. For the wyse man sayth. The  
dysfencion begynneth by a nother  
man. And the recounceylling by him  
self begynneth. And the prophete  
sayth flee shrewdenes and doo good-  
nes seke pees & folowe it in as my-  
kyn as i the is. yet say I not þe shal  
rather pursiwe to your aduersarys  
es for pees. than theif shal to you.  
For I knowe wel ynought that ye  
be so harde of herte that ye wyl doo  
no thyng for me. And salomon saith  
that he that hath ouer harde an her-  
te he at leste shal myschappe and mys-  
tyde. Whan Heliebe had herde dame  
prudence make semblaunte of wra-  
the he sayd in this wyse. Dame I  
praye you that ye be not displeid of  
of thynges that I saye. for ye knowe  
wel that I am angry & wroth &  
that is no wonder And they that ben  
wroth wote not wel what they goon  
ne what they sayn. wherfor the pro-  
phete saith that trobled eyen haue no  
clere syght. But say ye and counceyl  
me as you good lyketh. for I am re-

dy to do right so sa ye wyl desyre  
And yf ye wil repreue me of myn folie  
I am to more holden to loue you &  
to prysse you. For salamon sayth.  
He that repreueth hym that doth so-  
lye he shal synde gretter grace than  
he that dysseyueth hym wyth swete  
wordes. Than sayde dame pruden-  
ce. I make no semblaunt of wra-  
the of angre but for your proufyt.  
For salamon sayth. he is more wra-  
the that repreueth or chydeth a fool  
for his folpe shewyng hym samblau-  
te of wrath than he that supporteth  
hym and preyseth hym in his mysdo-  
yng and lawyth at his folpe. And  
this same salamon sayth after ward  
þ by the sorowfyl dysage of a man  
that is to saye by the sorow & they heuy  
cōtenaunce of a man the fool correc-  
teth hym self & amendeth Than said  
mellebe I shal not con answer you  
vnto so many fayr resons as ye haue  
put to me and shewed. Saye shortly  
your wyl and your counceyl and I  
am redy to performe and fulfille it  
Than dame prudence dyscoueryd al  
her wyl vnto hym and sayd. I coun-  
ceyl you aboue alle thynges that ye  
make pees betwene god and you.  
and be ye recounceyllid vnto hym &  
to his grace. For as I haue sayd as  
fore. God haue suffryd you to haue  
al this tribulacion & desese for youre  
synnes. And yf ye doo as I saye you  
God wyl sende your aduersaryes  
vnto you and make hem falle at  
your feet. redy to do your wil & your  
cōmaundementes. For salamon saith



Whan the condicion of a man is ple  
saunt and lykynz to god. he chaun  
geth the hertes of the mannys aduer  
sarres & constreyneþ hem to beseeke  
hym of pees and of grace And I pra  
ye þow lete me speke wyth þour ad  
uersarres pryuelly. For they shal not  
knowe that it be þour wyll or þour  
assente. & than whan I knowe her  
wyl and her entente I may counceyl  
þow the more sewtly. Dame sayd  
Mellebee do þour wyl and þour ly  
kyng for I put me only in þour dis  
posicion and ordynauce.

¶ Than whan dame prudence  
sawe the good wyl of her  
husbond desyberyd & to ke  
adyse in her self. thynkyng how she  
myght bring this nede to a good co  
clusion & to a good ende. And whan  
she sawe her tyme she sent for thise  
aduersarres to come to her in to a  
preuy place. And shewed wysely bi  
to them the grete goodnes that come  
of pees. and the grete harmes & pain  
les that ben in warre & said to hem  
in a goodly maner. how that they  
oughten to haue grete repentaunce of  
the Inurye and wronge that they  
had don bi to mellebee her lord and  
her doughter.

¶ And whan they herde the  
wordes of dame prudence  
they were so enspired and  
rauysshed and had so grete Joye of  
her þat woder was to telle A lady said  
they þe haue shewid bi to vs the blis  
syng of swetnes after the sawe of da  
uid the pphete for the recoiurelling

whiche that we be not worthy to ha  
ue in no manere. but we aughten to  
requyre it with grete contricion and  
humylite. that þe of þour grete good  
nes haue presented bi to vs. Now  
see we wel that the science and the  
connyng of Salamon is ful trewe  
he sayd that swete wordes multiply  
and encreasen frendes and make shre  
wes to be debonayr and meke. Let  
tes sayd they we put al our dede and  
al our mater & cause. hooly in þoure  
good wyl. And be redy to obeie to  
the commaundement of my lord Wel  
sebe. And dere and benygne lady we  
praye þou and beseeche þou as meke  
ly as we can that it ly ke bi to þour  
grete goodnes to fulfyllen in dede  
þour wordes goodly. for we cony  
deren and knowleche that we haue  
offendyd and grypud my lord melle  
be out of mesure so ferforth þat we be  
not of power to make hym amedys  
And thefor we oblygen vs and byn  
de vs and our frendes for to done al  
his wyll and commaundementis. But  
peraventure he hath suche angre &  
suche wrath to vs warde by cause  
of our offence. that he wol enioyne  
vs suche payne that we may not be  
re it ne susteyne it. And therfore no  
ble lady we beseeche þour noble pyte  
to take suche auysement in this nede  
that we ne our frendes be not dishe  
rtyd & dystroyed thourgh our folpe.

¶ Ertes said dame prudence  
it is a harde thing þat righ  
perpous that a man put  
hym self al bitterly in arbytracion



Etes sayd dame Prudence  
 I graunte you wel that  
 ouer moche suffraunce is  
 is not good. But yet hit soloweth  
 not therof þe enery persone to whom  
 men doo bylonpe to take of it venge  
 ance. For that apperteyneth and  
 longeth al only to the Iuges. For  
 they shalle venge the bylonpes and  
 the Iniuries. & therfor the two au  
 torites that ye haue sayd tofore bee  
 alonely vnderstode in the Iuges for  
 whan ye suffre ouer many wronges  
 and bylonpes to be be don wythou  
 ten punysshing they semen not a mā  
 to doo only newe wronges but they  
 commaunden hym and bydden hym  
 to do spure. And the souerayns and  
 the Iuges in theyr contrarie so my  
 kyll suffre of the shrewes and mysdo  
 ers. that they shold by suche suffrai  
 ce and by proces of tyme waxen of  
 suche power & myght that they shold  
 put out the Iuges & the souerayns  
 from thre places. And at the laste to  
 make hem to lese thier lordships but  
 lete be now put that. that ye haue le  
 ue to venge. I say ye be not of my  
 ght ne power as now to venge yow

For yf ye wyl make comparyson  
 vnto the myght of your aduersarys  
 ye shal fynde in many thynges þ  
 I haue shewed yow or this. that her  
 condycion is better than yowres. &  
 therfor say I that it is good as now  
 that ye suffre and be patient. Forther  
 more ye knowe wel that after the co  
 men sawe. it is a wodenes to a man  
 to stryue wyth a more myghty man

thā he is hym self & for to stryue with  
 a mā of euen strethe. þ is to say with  
 a man that is as strong as hym self  
 hit is grete peryl. And for to stryue  
 wyth a wayker than hym it is folpe  
 And therfor shold a man flee stry  
 uing as mykyll as he myght. For sa  
 lamon sayth hit is a grete worship  
 to a man to kepe hym fro noyse &  
 stryf And yf so happe that a man of  
 gretter myght & strengthe than thou  
 arte doo the greuaunce. stude and  
 bespe the rather to stynte the greuañ  
 ce. thā for to venge. For senekē saith  
 That he putteth hym in grete peryll  
 that stryuethe wyth a gretter man  
 than he is hem self. And caton sayth  
 that yf a man of hyper estate or degre  
 or of more myght than thou art do  
 the anoye or greuaunce suffre hym.  
 For that ones hath greued the many  
 another tyme releue the and help the  
 yet set I caas that ye haue a lyence  
 for to venge yow. yet ought you to  
 take hede to al thysse thynges afore  
 sayd er that ye take vengeance. For  
 I say that there be ful many thyng  
 ges that shalle restrayne yow of ven  
 geance takyng and make yow for  
 to endyne to suffre and to hane paci  
 ence in the wronges þ haue be doon.  
 fyrst and forward and yf ye wylle  
 consydere the defautes that been in  
 your owen persone. for whiche de  
 fautes god hath suffred yow to ha  
 ue al this tribulaciō as I haue said  
 before to yow. For the poete sayth.  
 That we oughten patiently to take  
 the tribulacions þ comen to vs whā



Mellebees frendes had herde this ne  
de and taken her aduysle and deysbe-  
ration of the forsaide mater and had  
exampned by grete besynes & grete  
counceyl. thy pas ful counceyl for to  
haue pees and reste. And that melie-  
bee shold receiue with good herte his  
aduersaries to foryeuenes and mer-  
cy. And whan dame prudence had  
herd thassent of her lord mellebe and  
of hys frendes. she was wonderly  
glad in her herte and sayd. there is a  
noble prouerbe that sayth the good-  
nes that thou mayst do this day do  
it. and abyde not ne delaye it not tyl  
to morowe And therfor. A counceyl þ  
ye sende your messagers suche as be  
discrete and wyse vnto your aduer-  
saries: Tellyng hem on your behalf  
that yf they wyl trete of pees and of  
accorde. that they shawe hem wyth-  
out delay or taryng to come vnto  
us whiche thyng performed was in-  
dede. And whan these trespassours &  
repentyng folke of her folyes that is  
to saye the aduersaries of mellebee.  
had herd what thysse messagers sayd  
vnto hem. they were right glad and  
Joful. and answerd ful mekely and  
benyngly yeldyng graces and than-  
kes to her lord mellebe & to al his co-  
panye. and shopen hem wythout de-  
lay to go wyth the messagers and to  
obey the comaundement of her lord  
Mellebe. And right anon they toke  
her waye to her lord mellebee. And  
right anon she toke her waye to her  
lordes courte & toke wyth hem som-  
me of her true frendes to make seyth

for hem & for to be her borowes.

And whan they were comen to the  
presence of mellebee he sayd to hem  
thysse wordes. Hit stondeth thus say-  
de Mellebee & soth it is that causeles  
and wythouten skyl & reson ye haue  
don grete Injuries to me to my wif  
prudence and to my doughter also.  
For ye haue entred in to my hous  
by vyolence & haue doon suche out-  
rage that al men knowe wel that ye  
haue deseruyd deth. & therfor wolde  
I knowe of you wheter ye wyl put  
te pow to punysshynge & the chastyng  
& the vengeance of his outrage in the  
wyl of me & of my wif or ellys not.

Then the wysest of hem thre  
t answerd for hem alle and  
sayde. Syr sayde he we  
knowe wel that we be vnworthy to  
come to the courte of so grete a lord  
and so worthy as ye be. For we haue  
o grete mystaken us and haue  
offended and gylted in suche wyse a-  
gaynst your hye lordship that trew-  
ly we haue deseruyd the deth: but yet  
for the grete goodnes and debonour  
te that alle the worlde wytnesseth of  
your persone. we submytte us to the  
excellence & benygnyte of your graci-  
ous lordship. and beseechyng you of  
your mercyable pite ye wyl cōsidere  
our grete repentaunce & our lowe sub-  
myssyon & graunte us foryeuenes of  
our outrageous trespasses and of  
fensis.

For wel we  
knowen that youre lyberal grace &  
mercy stretchen ferther in to goodnes  
than doon our outrageous gyltes.



and trespasses in to wyckednes Al be  
it that cursedly and dampnably we  
haue a gylted and a groud your  
hye lordshyp.

¶ Han Mellebee tokie hym  
t from the grounde ful full  
benyngly and receyued her  
obligacions and bondes by her o-  
thes vpon her pledges & borowes. &  
asspyned hem a certayn daye to retor-  
ne vnto her courte for to receyue and  
accepte the Iugement that mellebee  
wold comaunde to be doon on hem  
by the causes aforesayd. whiche thin-  
ges ordeyned euery man retorned to  
his owen hous. And whan dame  
prudence sawe her tyme she scy-  
ned & aped her lord mellebee. What venge-  
ance he thought to take vpon his ad-  
uersaries. to which mellebee answerd  
and sayd certes I thynke & purpose  
me fully to dyssherte hem of alle þ  
cuer they haue and put hem in exyle  
for cuermore. Lettes sayd dame pru-  
dence. This weere a cruel sentence &  
moche agaynst reson for ye be riche  
ynough and haue non nede of other  
mennes goodes. And ye myght ful-  
lyghtly in this wyse gete yow a full  
couetous name. whiche is a vycious  
lyuyng and ought to be eschewed of  
euery good man. for after the wor-  
de of thapostle. Couetyse is the rote  
of al haumes And therfor it were bet-  
ter to yow to lese so moche good of  
your owen than for to take of her  
good in this manere. for better it is  
to lese good wyth worship. than it is  
to wyne good wyth bysonye and

shame. And euery man ought to do  
his dyslignce & besynes to gete hym  
a good name. & yet shal he not hoodly  
besye hym in luyng of his good na-  
me. But he shal alleway enforen to  
do somme thyng by wyche he may  
renouele or renowe his good name.  
for it is wyrtoun that the olde goode  
loos of a man or good name is sone  
goon and passid whan it is not ne-  
wed ne renouelyd. and as touchinge  
that ye sayn. ye wol exyle your ad-  
uersaries. that thynketh me moche  
agayn reson and out of mesure. con-  
sydering the power that they haue  
yeue yow vpon hem self. And yet it  
is wyrtoun that he is worthy to lese  
his pryuplege þ mysuseth the myght  
and the power that is yeue hym And  
I set caas þ ye myght enioye hem þ  
payne by right & by lawe. whiche þ  
I trowe ye may not do I say ye mys-  
ght not put it to execution for para-  
uenture than were it lyke to retorne  
to the warre as it was before. And  
therfore ys ye wyl that men doo yow  
obeysaunce ye must demene yow more  
curtously. This is to say ye must ye-  
ue more espy penaunce & Iugement.  
for it is wyrtoun that he þ most cur-  
teously comaundeth to hym men mos-  
te obye. & therfor I praye yow þ in  
this necessity and in this nede ye cast  
yow for to ouercome your herte for  
senek saith. He that ouercometh his  
herte. ouercometh twyes.  
And tulyus sayth. There is  
nothyng so comendable in a gre-  
te lord as whan he is debonayre

and meke. And appeesyth hym light-  
ly. And I praye you that ye wyl  
now forbide to do vengeance in su-  
che a maner that youre good name  
may be lepte and conseruyd. And þe  
men may haue cause and mater to  
praysye you of pyte and of mercy.  
And that ye haue no cause to repete  
you of thyng that is doon. For  
Senekre sayth: He ouercometh an e-  
uyl maner that repēteth hym of his  
byctorye. wherfore I praye you lete  
mercy be in your herte. To the effect  
to the entente that god almyghty ha-  
ue mercy on you in his laste Iuge-  
ment. For saynt James sayth in  
his epistlys Iugement wythout mer-  
cy shal be doo to hym that hath noo  
mercy on an other wyght.

þan mellebee had herd the  
w grete shylles and resons of  
danne prudence a her wy-  
se Informacyons and techynges his  
hert began tendyne to the wyll of  
his wyf consydyryn her grete en-  
tente confermed hym anon and as-  
sented to werke after her counceylle.

And thanked god of whom pre-  
cedeth alle goodnes and vertue that  
hym had sente a wyf of grete dyscre-  
cyon. And whan the day cam that  
his aduersaryes shold appere in his  
presence. He spak to hem ful  
goodly and sayd in this wyse. Al-  
be it so that of youre pryde and pre-  
sumpcion and hys folwe of your ne-  
gynce and Inconynge ye haue

mysborne you and trespacyd vnto  
me. yet for as myghty as I see youre  
grete humylyte and that ye be sorry  
and repentaunte of youre gyltes it  
constrayneth me to doo you grace  
and mercy.

Wherfor I re-  
ceyue you to my grace and foryeue  
you vterly alle the offences Inuiri-  
es and wronges that ye haue doon  
ayenst me to this effecte and to this  
ende. that god of his endeles mercy  
wyl at the day of my depnyng forye-  
ue me my gyltes. that I haue trespas-  
sed to hym in this worlde. For  
doubteles yf we be sorry and repen-  
taunte for our synnes and gyltes.

The syght of our lord god is soo fre  
and soo mercyable that he wyl for-  
gyue vs our gyltes and brynge vs  
to the blyss that neuer shalle haue  
ende Amen.

Here endeth Chaucers Tale of  
Mellebee and Prudence his wyf a  
Sophye his doughter of moralte.



Here Begynneth the monkes prologue

W Han endyd Was the tale of Mellesbe  
 And of prudence and her benignyte  
 Dure hoost sayd as I am feythfulle man  
 And by that precious corpus Madrian  
 I hadde lyuer than a barelle of ale  
 That good leef my wyf hade herde this tale  
 For she is nothyng of suche pacience  
 As was this Mellesbeus wyf prudence  
 By goddes bones whan I bete my knanes  
 She bryngeth me the grete clobbered staues  
 And cryeth sle the dogges euerichone  
 And breke bothe bake and euery bone  
 And if that any nyghboure of myn  
 Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne  
 Or be so hardy to her to trespase  
 Whan she comyth home she rampeth in my face  
 And cryeth fals colwarde wreke thy wyf  
 By corpus dominus I wol haue thy knyf  
 And thou shalt haue my distaue and go spyne  
 Fro day to nyght she wol thus begynne  
 Allas she sayeth that euir I was shape  
 To wedde a mylkesoppe a colwarde ape  
 That wol be ouir ledde with euery wighe  
 Thou darst nat stonde by thy wyues right  
 This is my lyf. but if that I wolde fight  
 And oute at the dore anon I must me dighe  
 And elles I am lost but if that I  
 Be lyke a wylde lyoun fool hardy  
 I wote wele she wol do me sle som day  
 Som nyghboure and than go my way  
 For I am varlous with knyf in honde

## The monkes prologue

Al be it that I dar nat her withstonde  
For she was byg in armes by my feith  
That shal he fynde that her mysdoth oz sayeth  
But let vs passe a way from this matere  
My lord sir monke he sayd be mery of chere  
For ye shalle telle a tale truly  
To Kouchestre stondest here fast by  
Ryde forth myn owne lorde breke nat our game  
But by my trouthe I knowe nat your name  
Whether shalle I calle you my lord dan John  
Or dan Thomas dan robert or dan Albon  
Or of what house be ye by youre fader kyn  
I bowe to god thou hast a fulle fayre chyn  
It is a gentyl pasture there thou goost  
Thou art nat lyke a penaunt oz a goost  
Upon my feyth thou art som officere  
Som worthy Sexten oz som celerere  
For by my fadre soule as to my dome  
Thou art a mayster whan thou art at home  
No poure cloysterez ne no poure noupce  
But a gouernoure wyly and wyse  
And therewith of brawne and of bones  
A wele faryng persone for the nones  
I pray to god geue him confusioun  
That first he brought into religion  
Thou woldest haue be a tred soule a right  
Haddyst thou as grete leue as thou hast myght  
To parfouze me alle thy lust in engendrure  
Thou haddest begoten many a creature  
Allas why werist thou so wyde a cope  
God geue me sorowe and I were pope  
Nat only thou but euery myghty man  
Though he were shore high upon his pay



## The monkes prologue

Sholde haue a wyf, for alle this worlde is loyn  
Religion hath take by alle the corn  
Of tredpyng and bozel men be shrympes  
Of feble trees there comyth wrechyd pypes  
This makith that oure heyres be so slender  
And feble that they may nat wele engendre  
This makith that oure wyues wol assay  
Religpous folke for they may better pay  
Of venus paymentes than may we  
God wote no bussheburghes pay ye  
But be nat wrothe my lord though I pley  
Ful ofte in game a soth haue I herde say  
This worthy monke toke alle in patience  
And sayd I wol do my diligence  
As fer as sowneth into honeste  
To tel you a tale or two or thre  
And if you lyst to herken hedprwarde  
I wol you sayn of the lyf of seint Edward  
Or elles tragedys first I wol telle  
Of whiche I haue an hundred in my cello  
Tragedy is for to telle a certayn story  
As olde bokes maken memozy  
Of them that stonden in grete prosperite  
And is falle oute of high degre  
In to mysery and endith wrechydly  
And they been bercyfed comonly  
Of sey feet whiche men clepen exameron  
In prose eke been endyted many one  
And in metre many a sondry wyse  
To this ough t ynough to suffise  
Now herkeneth if you lyst for to here  
But first I beseeche you in this matere  
Though I by ordre tel nat these thynges

## The monkes Tale

Be it of popes Emperoures oz kynnges  
And after theiꝝ ages as men Writen fynde  
But telle them som biſoze and ſom behynde  
As it comyth to my remembraunce  
Haue me excuſed of myn ignoraunce

Here endith the monkes prologue  
And begynneth his Tale



i      Wol beWayle in maner of tragedie  
The harme of them that stonde in high degre  
And fylle so that there nas no remedy  
To bryng them oute of theire aduersite  
For certayn whan that fortune lyst to fle  
Ther may no man of her the cours withholde  
Late noman truste on blynde prosperite  
Be ware by this ensample yong and olde  
At Lucifer though he an aungel were



And nat a man at him I wol begynne  
 For though fortune may nat aungel dere;  
 From high degre yet fyl he for his synne  
 Down into helle where he is yet in  
 O lucifer brightest of aungelles alle  
 Now art thou sathanas thou mayst nat twayn  
 Dute of mysery whiche thou arte falle

So Adam in the felde of damascene  
 With goddes owne synner wrought was  
 And nat begoten of mannes sperme bckene  
 And welte alle paradise sauyng one tre  
 Hadde neuir worldly man so high degre  
 As Adam. tyl he for mys gouernaunce  
 Was dryuen oute of his high prosperite  
 To laboure and to helle and to myschaunce

So Sampson whiche that was annunciat  
 By the aungel long or his natiuyte  
 And was to god almyghty consecrate  
 And stode in nobles while he myght se  
 Was neuir suche a nother as was he  
 To speke of strengith and therto hardynes  
 But to his wyues told he his secre  
 Through whiche he slough him for wrechydnesse

Sampson this noble and myghty champion  
 Withoute wepy saue his handes tway  
 He slough and alle to rent the tyoun  
 Toward his weddyng wallpyng by the wey  
 His fals wyf coude him so please and pray  
 Tyl she his counseyl knewe and she bntreue  
 Wnto his foos his counseyl gan he wray  
 And him for soke and toke an other newe

An hundred foyes toke Sampson for ire  
 And alle theire tayles he to tydder bonde

## The monkes Tale

And set the foxes tayles alle on fyre  
For he in euery tayle put a bronde  
And they Brent alle the cornes of that londe  
And theire olyues and theire Wynes eke  
A thousand men eke he slough With his honde  
And hadde no weppyn but an asses cheke

Whan they were slayn so thristed him that he  
Was wele nygh loyn for whiche he gan to prey  
That god worde of his peyne haue som pyte  
And sende him drynke or elles must he dye  
And of this asses cheke that was so drye  
Dute of a wang tothe sprang anon a welle  
Of whiche he dranke ynough shortly to say  
Thus halpe him god as Iudicum can tel

By berry force at gaza on a nyght  
Maugre the philystiens of that cyte  
The gates of the toun he hath by plight  
And on his backe y caried them hath he  
Rygh on an hylle where as men myght them se  
O noble and myghty sampson leef and dere  
Hadde thou nat tolde to women thy secre  
In alle this worlde ne hadde be thy pere

This Sampson neyther sydre dranke ne wyne  
Ne on his hede cam rasoure none ne shere  
By precept of the messangere deuyne  
For al his strengthes in his heris were  
And fully twenty pere by pere  
Of israel he hadde the gouernance  
But after sone wept he many a tere  
For wpmen brought him to myschaunce

Vnto his lemman dalida he tolde  
That in his heris alle his strenght lay  
And falsely to his foos him she solde



## The monkes Tale

And sleppynge in her barme vpon a day  
They made to clyppe or shere his here a wey  
And made his fomen alle his craft aspyen  
And whan that they him fonde in suche array  
They bonde him faste and put oute his eyen  
But of his heres were clypped or shaue  
There nas no bonde that myght him bynde  
But now is he put in pryson in a caue  
Where as they made him at the querne grynde  
O noble Sampson strongest of mankynde  
O whilom iuge in glozy and in riches  
Now mayst thou wepe with thyne eyen blynde  
Sithen thou art from wele fallen into wrecchyndes

The ende of this captyf was as I shalle say  
His fomen made a feest vpon a day  
And made them as their fool bifoze them pley  
And this was in a temple of grette array  
But at the last he made a foule fray  
For he two postes shoke and made them falle  
And down fylle the temple and there it lay  
And slew him selue and eke his fomen alle

This is to say the prynces euerichone  
And eke thre thousand bodies were there slayn  
With fallynge of the grette temple of stone  
Of Sampson wol I nomore sayn  
Be ware of this ensample olde and playn  
That no man telle their counseyl to their wyues  
Of suche thyng as they wolde haue secre sayn  
If that it touche their lymmes or their lyues

O Hercules the sonerayne conqueroure  
Synge his werkes laude and his renoun  
For in his tyme of strenght he bare the flour  
He slough and reft the shynne of the lyoun

C. im

## The monkes Tale

And of Centaurus leyd the boſt a doun  
He arpies ſlowe the cruelle birdes felle  
He the goldeſ apelles raft fro the dragon  
He droue oute cerberus the hounde of hel

He ſlough the cruel tyraunt buſurus  
And made his horſe to frete him fleſſhe and boon  
He ſlough the verzy ſerpent venemous  
Of achilles two hornes brake he that one  
And he ſlew cacus in a caue of ſtone  
He ſlew the gyaunt Antheus the ſtrong  
He ſlough the gryſely bore and that a noon  
And bare his hede vpon his necke long

Was neuir wight ſithen the worlde began  
That ſlough ſo many monſtres as dyd he  
Through the wyde world his name ran  
What for his ſtrenght and his bounte  
And euery realme went he for to ſee  
He was ſo ſtrong that no man myght him lette  
And bothe worldes endys ſayth Trophe  
In ſtede of boundes he of bras a pyler ſet

A lemmā hadde this noble champrion  
That hight dyanyra as freſſhe as may  
And as clerkes make mencion  
She hath him ſent a ſhert freſſhe and gay  
Allas that ſhert allas and wela way  
Enuynmed was ſubtelly with alle  
That oz he hadde werpd it half a day  
It made his fleſſhe al fro the bones falle

But neuir theleſſe clerkes her excuſen  
By one that hight neſſus that it maketh  
Be as he may I wol nat her accuſen  
But on his body the ſhert he werpd alle naked  
Tyl the fleſſhe was with the venym ſlaked



## The monkes Tale

And whan he sawe none other remedy  
In hoot coles he hath him self raked  
For with no benyng depned he to dye

Thus starf this worthy myghty hercules  
Fo who may truste in fortune any throwe  
For him that foloweth al this worlde of prees  
Or he be ware is oft leyde fulle lowe  
For wylse is he that him self can knowe  
Be ware for whan that fortune lyst to glose  
Than wayteth she her man down to throwe  
By suche a way as he wolde lest suppose  
t he myghty trone the precious tresoure

The glorious septre and the ryal magesty  
That hadde the kyng Nabugodonosor  
With tongue bnneth may discribed be  
He twyes wan ierusalem that cyte  
The vessel of the temple hel with him ladde  
At Babilon was his souerayn see  
In whiche his glozy and his dekyte he had

The fayrest children of the blode ryal  
Of ierusalem he dyd dogelde anon  
And made eche of them to be his thralle  
Among alle other danyel was one  
That was the wysest childe of euerichone  
For he the dremps of the kyng expounded  
Ther as in caldey clerkes were ther none  
That wylst to what fyne his dreame fownded

This proude kyng leet make a statuf of gold  
Sixty cubites long and seupn in brede  
To whiche ymatte bothe yong and olde  
Comaunded he to loute and haue in drede  
Or in a furney full of flames rede  
He sholde be dede that wolde nat obey

## The monkes Tale

But neuiz wolde accomde to that dede  
Danyel ne his yong felowes twey

This kyng of kynges proude and elate  
He wende god that sytteth in mageste  
He myght nat bereue of his estate  
But sodenly he lost his dignyte  
And lyke a best him sempd for to be  
And ete hay as an ox and lay theroute  
In rayn With Wylde bestes walked he  
Tyl a certayn tyme was come aboute

And lyke an eglys fethers were his heris  
And naples lyke byrdes clawes wer  
God releuyd him at certayn yeres  
And gaue him wytte and than with many a tere  
He thanked god and euiz his lyf in fere  
Was he to do amys or more trespass  
And or that he layd was on his bere  
He knewe that god was fulle of myght and grace  
h Is sone whiche that hight balthasar

That held the regne after his faders day  
He by his fader coude nat be ware  
For proude he was of hert and of aray  
And eke an ydolaster was he ay  
His high estate assured him in pryde  
But fortune cast him down and there he lay  
And sodenly his regne can deuyde

A feste he made vnto his lordes alle  
Vpon a tyme he made them blythe be  
And than his officers gan he calle  
Both bryng forth the bestelles quod he  
Whiche that my fader in his prosperite  
Dute of the temple of ierusalem beraft  
And to oure goddes thanke we



## The monkes Tale

Of honoure that our elders With vs last  
His wyf his lordes and his concubynes  
Ay dronken While theire appetytes last  
Dute of these noble besselles sondry Wynes  
And on a walle this kyng his eyen cast  
And sa we an hounde armeles that wrote fast  
For fere of whiche he quoke and sighed soze  
This hound that balthasar made so soze agast  
Wrote mane. techel. phares. and no more

In al that londe magicien Was there none  
This coude expowne what this lettre ment  
But danyel expounded it anoon  
And sayd kyng. god to thy fadre sent  
Glorie and honoure regne tresour and rent  
And he was proude and nothyng god he drad  
And therfore grete wra the god bpon him sent  
And him berast the reigne that he hadde

He was oute cast of mannes company  
With asses was his habitacioun  
And ete he y as a best in weet and dry  
Tyl that he knewe by grace and by reason  
That god of heuyn hath domynacion  
Quir euery reigne and euery crature  
And than hadde god of him compassion  
And him restored his reigne and his figure

Eke thou that art his sone art proude also  
And knowest alle these thynges pryuely  
And art rebel to god and his foo  
Thou dranke eke of his besselles boldely  
Thy wyf eke and thy wenches synfully  
Dranke of the same besselles sondry Wynes  
And heried false goddes cursydly  
Therfore to the shapen grete pyne is

## The monkes Tale

This honde was sent fro god that on the walle  
Wrote mane techel phares trust me  
Thy reigne is done thou wepest nat alle  
Deuyded is thy regne and it shalbe  
To medes and to percpens quod he  
And that same nyght the kyng was slaw  
And darpus occupied his degree

Though he therto hadde nother right ne la we

Lordynges here by ensamples may ye take

How that in lordshyp is no sikyrnes  
For whan that fortune wol aman forsake  
He berith a wey his regne and his richesse  
And eke his frendes bothe moze and les  
And what man hath frendes throughe fortune  
Mysshappe wol make him enemyes I gesse  
This prouerbe is fulle soth and ful comune

c Enobia of Palymerie quene

As writeth percpens of her noblenes

So worthy was in armes and so hene  
That no wight past her in hardynesse  
Ne in lynage ne in none othez gentylnes  
Of kynges blode of Perce is she discended  
I say that she hadde nat moste fayrnesse  
But of her shappe she myght nat be amended

From her childehode I fynde that she fled

Office of woman and to wode she went  
And many a wylde hertes blode she shedde  
With arowes brode that she to them sent  
She was so swyft that she anoon them hent  
And whan that she was elder she wolde kylle  
Epounes lybertes and berys alle to rent  
And in her armes welde them at her wylle

She durst wylde bestes dennys seke



## The monkes Tale

And renne in the mounten alle the nyght  
And slepe vndre a busshe and she coude eke  
Wrastyl by very force and very myght  
With any yong man were her neuiz so wight  
There myght nothyng in her armes stonde  
She kept her maydenhede from euery wight  
To no man depned she to be bonde

But at the last her frendes hath her married  
To Onedache a pryncce of that countre  
Al were it so that she them long tarped  
And ye shalle vnderstonde how that he  
Hadde suche fantasies as hadde she  
But neuirtherlesse whan they were knytte in fere  
They lyued in ioye and in felicitye  
For eche of them had othez leef and dere

Saue one thyng that she wolde neuiz assent  
By no wey that he sholde by her eye  
But onys for it was pleygh her entent  
To haue a chyldre the worlde to multiplie  
And also sone as she myght aspye  
That she was nat with childe with that dede  
Than wolde she suffre him to do his fanteasy  
Eft sones and nat but onys oute of drede

And if she were with chyldre at that cast  
Nomore sholde he play that game  
Tyl fully fourty daies were y past  
Thenne wolde she onys suffre him the same  
Alle were this onedache wyfde or tame  
He gat no more of her for thus she sayde  
It was to wyues lychery and shame  
In othez caas if men with them played

Two sones by this Onedache had she  
The whiche she kept in vertue and lettrure

## The monkes Tale

But now vnto oure tale turne We  
I say that so worshopfulle a creature  
And wyse therewith and large with mesure  
So penyble in warre and curtesye the  
Ne more labour myght in warre endure  
Was noon though alle this worlde men wold seke  
Her riche array ne myght nat be told  
As wele in vessel as in her clothynge  
She was alle cladde in perre and in golde  
And eke left nat for none huntynge  
To haue of sondry tonges folke knowynge  
Whan that she leysse hadde and for to entende  
Tolerne bores was alle her lyhyng  
How she in vertue her lyf myght dispende  
And shortly of this story for to trete  
So doughty was her husbonde as she  
That they conquered many realmes grete  
In the orient with many a fayre cyte  
Appertenaunt vnto the maieste  
Of Rome. and with strengith helde them faste  
Ne neuir myght her fomen do her sle  
Al the while that Dnedakys daies last  
Her batayles who solyst them for to rede  
Agayn Sapor the kynge and othere mo  
And how alle this processe fyl in dede  
Why she conquerd and what tytle she had therto  
And after of her myscheif and of her wo  
How that she was besegged and y take  
Let him to my mayster petrarke goo  
That writeth ynough of this I vndertake  
Whan Dnedache was dede she myghtely  
The realmes helde and with her owne honde  
Agenst her foos she fought truly



That ther nas prynce ne kyng in alle that sonde  
But were glade if they that grace fonde  
That she ne sholde bpon his sonde warrey  
With her they made allyaunce by bonde  
To be in peas and let them ryde and pley

The emperoure of Rome Claudius  
Ne him biforn the Romayn Galtene  
Ne durst neuir be so corageous  
Ne noon ermyne ne none egipcien  
Ne surzen ne none arzabien  
Within the felde that durst with her fight  
Lest that she wolde them with her handes slayn  
Dz With her meney put them to flight

In kynges habite went her sones two  
As heires of her realmaes alle  
And hermanno and titamallo  
Theire names were as perciens them calle  
But ay fortune hath in her hony galle  
This myghty quene may no while endure  
Fortune oute of reigne made her to falle  
To wrechydnesse and to mysauenture

Aurilian whan that the gouernaunce  
Of Rome cam in his hondes twey  
He shope bpon this quene to do vengeaunce  
And with his leggyons he toke his wey  
Toward Tenobie and shortly for to say  
He made her fle and at the last her hent  
And setryd her and eke her children twey  
And wan the sonde and home to Rome he went

Among othez thynges that he wan  
Her chare that of golde was wrought and perze  
This grete Romayn this Aurilian  
Hath with him lad that for men sholde se

## The monkes Tale

Biforn his'trumphe walkyd she  
With golden cheynes on her hangyng  
Crowned she was as after her degre  
And ful of perry charged her clothyng  
    Allas fortune she that whilom was  
Dredefulle to kynges and to Emperoures  
Now gaureth alle the people on her alas  
And she that helmyd was in starke stoures  
And wan by force townes strong and toures  
Shal on her hede now were autrempte  
And she that bare the septre fulle of floures  
Shal bere a dystaf her cost for to quyte  
o   If Mylne grete Barnabo biscount  
    God of delyte and scourge of Lumbardy  
Why sholde nat I thy fortune acounte  
Sithen in estate thou clomben were so hye  
Thy brother sone that was thy double alpe  
For he thy nebeve was and sonne in la we  
Within his prysyn made the to dye  
But why ne how not I that thou were sla we  
o   If the erle huglyn of pyse the langoure  
    There may no tongue telle for pyte  
But lyteloute of pyse stondeth a toure  
In whiche toure in prysyn put was he  
And with him his lytel chyldren thre  
The eldest scarfly fyue yere was of age  
Allas fortune it was grete cruelte  
Suche byrdes to put in suche a cage  
Dampned he was to dye in that prysyn  
For Roger whiche bissshop was of pyse  
Hadde on him made a false subgession  
Throughe whiche the people gan on him aryse  
And put him in prysyn in suche wyse



## The monkes Tale

As ye haue herd and mete and drynke he hadde  
So smal that wele bnneth it may suffise  
And therwith al it was fulle poure and hadde

And on a day it bespille that in that oure  
Whan that his mete was wont to be brought  
The gayler shytte the dores of the toure  
He herd it wele but he spake right nought  
And in his hert anoon ther fylle a thought  
That they for hungre wolde do him to dyen  
Allas quod he allas that I was brought  
Therwith the teris fyl from his eyen

His yong sone that thre yere was of age  
Vnto his fadre he sayd why do ye wepe  
Whan wol oure gayler bryng oure potage  
Is ther no morsel brede that ye do kepe  
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe  
Now wolde to god that I myght slepe euir  
Than sholde no hungry in my soule crepe  
Ther is no thyng than brede that me were lyuer

Thus day by day this childe gan to crye  
Tyl in his faders barne a down it lay  
And sayd fare wele fader I must dye  
And kyssed his fader and dyed the same day  
And whan the woful fader dede him say  
For wo his armes he gan to byte  
And sayd allas fortune and wela wey  
Thy fals whele my woo alle may wyte

This othez childe wende that for hungry it was  
That he his armes knewe and nat for wo  
And sayd fader do nat so allas  
Bnt rather ete the flesshe vpon vs two  
Dure flesshe thou yaued vs take oure flesshe vs fro  
And ete ynough right thus the childe sayde

## The monkes Tale

And after that within a day or two  
They leyde them down in his lappe and deyed  
Him self despayred eke for hunger starf  
Thus endyd the myghty erle of pyse  
From high estate fortune away him carf  
Of this tragedy it ought ynough suffice  
Who so wol here it in a lenger wyse  
Redith the grete poete of pytaye  
That hight daunte for he can it deuyse  
From poynte to poynte nat one worde wol he saye  
a I though that Nero were as vicious  
As any feend that lyeth ful low adoun  
yet he as tellith vs swetonys  
At this worlde hadde in subiection  
Bothe est and west and septentrion  
Of rubies saphires and of perles white  
Were alle his clothes browded by and down  
For he in gemmys gretly gan delyte  
More delicate more pompeous of aray  
More proude was neuiz emperour than he  
That ilke cloth that he hadde weyde one day  
After that tyme he nolde it neuiz se  
Nettes of golde threde hadde he grete plente  
To fyssh in tyber whan him lyst to pley  
His lustes were as lawe in his degre  
For fortune as his frende wolde him obey  
He Rome Brent for his delycacy  
The senatoures he slough upon a day  
To here how that thome men wolde wepe and crye  
And slough his brother and by his sustre lay  
His modre made he in a pytous aray  
For he her wombe leet slytte to beholde  
Where he conceived was so welaway



## The monkes Tale

That he so lytel of his modre tolde

No teris oute of his eyen for that sight  
Ne cam, but sayd a fayre woman was she  
Grette wondre is that he coude or myght  
Be domesman of her dede beaute  
The wyne to bryng him comaunded he  
And dranke anon none othez wo he made  
Whan myght is ioyned vnto cruelte  
Allas to depe wol the benym Wade

In youthe a mayster had this emperoure  
To teche him lettrure and curtesy  
For of moralite he was the floure  
As in his tyme but if his bokes lye  
And whyles his mayster hadde of him maystre  
He made him so connyng and so souple  
That long tyme it was or tyrannye  
Or any byce durst in him vncouple

Seneca his mayster was of whiche I deuyse  
Bicause Nero hadde of him suche drede  
For he for his byces wolde him chastice  
Discretly as by worde and nat by dede  
Sir he wolde say an emperonz moot nede  
Be vertuous and hate tyranny  
For whiche he made him a bathe to blede  
On bothes his armes tyl he must dye

This nero hadde eke of accustomaunce  
In youthe a penyng his mayster to ryse  
Whiche after ward him thoughte a grette greuaunce  
Bicause he oft wolde him chastice  
Therfore he made him dye in this wyse  
To chese in a bathe to dye in this manere  
Rather than to haue a nother turmentyse  
And thus hath Nero slayn his mayster dere

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## The monkes Tale

Now fyl it so that fortune lyst no lenger  
The high pryde of nero to cheryshe  
For though he ware strong yet was she stronger  
She thought thus by god I am to nyce  
To sette a man that is fulfylled of vyce  
In high degre and an emperoure him calle  
By god oute of his sete I wol him tryce  
When he lest wenyth sonest shal he falle

The people roos vpon him on a nyght  
For his defeaute and whan he it aspyed  
Dute of his doores anon he hath him dight  
Alone and there he wende to be allyed  
He knocked faste and ay the more he cryde  
The fastyr shytted they the doores alle  
Tho wist he wele he hadde him self bettyled  
And went his wey no lenger durst he calle

The people cryde and rombled vp and down  
That with his eris he herd how that they sayd  
Where is this false tyraunt this neron  
For fere ful nere oute of his wytte he Brayde  
And to his goddes pytously he prayde  
For socoure but it myght nat betyde  
For drede of this him thought that he deyde  
And ran into a gardeyn him to hyde

And in this gardeyn fonde he chorles twey  
And sytting by a fyre grete and rede  
And to the chorles twey he gan to pray  
To sle him and to geyde of his hede  
That to his body whan he were dede  
Were no despyte doon for his defame  
Him self he sloth he coude no better rede  
Of whiche fortune lough and hadde game



# The monkes Tale

Was neuir capdeyn vndre a kyng  
That regnes mo put in subiection  
Ne stronger was in feld of al thyng  
As in his tyme ne greter of renoun  
Ne more pompeous in high presumpcion  
Than olopherne whiche fortune ay byst  
Solicorouse ladde him vp and down  
Tyl that he dede was or that he wylt  
Nat only that this worlde hadde of him a we  
For lesyng of richesse and lyberty  
But he made euery man renge his la we  
Nabugodonosor was lord sayd he  
None other lord shal honoured be  
Apenst his heste ther dar no wight trespas  
Saue in bethulia a strong cyte  
Where Eliachim was preest of that place  
But take hepe of the deth of olopherne  
Amyd his hoost he dronke lay al nyght  
Within his tente large as is a berne  
And yet for alle his pompe and alle his myght  
Judith a woman as he lay vp right  
Slepyng his hede of smote and fro his tent  
Ful pryuelly she stole from euery wight  
And with his hede vnto her toune she went  
W hat nedith it of kyng Antiochus  
To telle his high and ryalle maggesty  
His high pryde his werke benemous  
For suche a nother man nas neuir as he  
Redith what that he was in machabe  
And redith the proude werkes that he sayd  
And why he fyl from his prosperite  
And in an hylle how wrecidly he deyde  
Fortune him hadde enhaunced so in pryde

## The monkes Tale

That verily he wende he myght attayne  
Vnto the sterzys bpon every syde  
And in a balaunce to wey eche mounteyn  
And alle the flodes of the see restreyne  
And goddes people hadde he moost in hate  
Them wolde he sle in turment and in peyne  
Wenynge that god ne myght his pryde abate

And for that Nichamor and Tymothe  
Whiche iewes were benquysshed myghtely  
Vnto the iewes suche an hate had he  
That he had grathed his chare fulle hastely  
And swore and sayde ful despytously  
Vnto ierusalem he wolde eft sone  
To wreke his pre on it ful cruelly  
But of his purpos was he let fulle sone

God for his manace him soze smote  
With inuysible wounde ay incurable  
That in his guttes carf so and bote  
That his peynes were importable  
And certaynly the wreche was resonable  
For many a manns guttes dyd he peyne  
But from his purpos cursed and dampnable  
For alle his smert he nolde him restreyne

But hadde anon pareylen his hoost  
And sodenly or he than was ware  
God daunted alle his pryde and alle his boost  
For he so soze fyl oute of his chare  
That alle his lymmes and his fleshe to tare  
So that he ne myght go ne ryde  
But in a chare men aboute him bare  
Al for brosed bothe bake and syde

The wreche of god him smote so cruelly  
That in his body wyched wormes crept



## The monkes Tale

And therewithal he stanke so horribly  
That none of alle his meny that him kept  
Whether that he woke oz elles slept  
Ne myght nat of him the stynke endure  
And in this myschief he wayled and he wept  
And knewe god lord of euery creature

To al his hoost and to him self also  
Ful waltson was the stynke of his careyn  
No man myght him bere to ne fro  
And in his stynke and in his horrible peyn  
He starf ful wrechydly on a mountayn  
Thus hath this robber and this homycide  
That many a man made to wepe and playn  
Suche guerdon as belongith vnto pryde  
t he storp of Alisaundre is so comune

That euery wight that hath discrecioun  
Hath herd somwhat oz alle of his fortune  
This wyde worlde as in conclusioun  
He wan by strenght and by his renoun  
They were glade for peas vnto him sende  
The pryde of man and host he leyd adoun  
Where so he cam vnto the worldes ende

Comparioun myght yet neuiz be maked  
Bitwyte him and an othez conquerour  
For alle this worlde for drede of him quaked  
He was of knyghthode and of freedom floure  
Fortune him made the heire of high honoure  
Saue wyne and women nothyng myght as wage  
His high entent in armes and labour  
So was he ful of lounyng corage

What pryde were it to him thought I you tolde  
Of darius and of an hundred thousand mo  
Of prynces erles and kynnges bolde

Dim

## The monkes Tale

Whiche he conquered and brought to wo  
I say as fez as a man may ryde or go  
The worlde was his what shuld y more deuyse  
For though I wrote and tolde you euir mo  
Of this knyghthode. it myght nat suffise  
vii yere he reigned as y rede in Machabe  
Philippes sone of macedone he was  
That first was kyng of grece that countre  
A worthy gentyl Arisaundes allas  
That euir shuld the falle suche a caas  
Enpossoned of thy folke thou were  
Thy syce fortune hath turned into an aas  
And yet for the ne wept she neuir a tere

Who shal yeue men teris to compleyne  
The deth of gentylles and of fraunchise  
That alle the worlde welded in his demeyne  
And yet him thought it myght nat suffise  
So ful was his corage of high empyse  
Allas who shal me helpe to endite  
Fals fortune and posson to dispyse  
The whiche of alle this wo I wyte  
B y wysdome manhode and grete laboure  
From humble bedde to ryalle magesty

Up roos he Julius the conqueroure  
That alle the occident bylonde and see  
By strenght of hond or elles by tetrye  
And vnto Rome made them tributary  
And sithen of Rome emperour was he  
Tyl that fortune weyt his aduersary  
A myghty cesar that in Thessaly  
Aynst pompeyus fader thyn in la we  
That of the orient hadde the cheualry  
As fez as that the day begynneth to dawne



## The Monkes tale

Them through knyghthode hast take and slaue  
Saue fewe folke that with pompeius fledde  
Through whiche thou puttest al the orient in a we  
Thanke fortune that so wele the spedde

But now a lytel while I wol be wayle  
This pompeius this noble gouernoure  
Of Rome whiche that fledde at this batayle  
I say one of his men a false traytoure  
His hede of smote to wyne him fauoure  
Of Iulius. and to him thedez brought  
Allas pompey of the orient conquerour  
That fortune vnto suche a spye the brought

To Rome agayn repayrith Iulius  
With his tryumphe laureat ful hye  
But on a tyme brutus cassius  
That euir hadde of his high estate enuye  
Fulle pryuelly had made conspiracy  
Apenst this Iulius in subtel wyse  
And cast the place in whiche he shuld dy  
With boydehynes as I shal you deuyse

This Iulius vnto the capitol went  
Upon a day as he was wont to goon  
And in the capitol anoon him hent  
This false brutus and his othez soon  
And styched him with boydehynnes anoon  
With many a wound and thus they leet him lye  
But neuir gruntyd he at no stroke but one  
Or elles at two but if his story lye

So manly was this Iulius of herte  
And so welelouyd estatly honesty  
That though his dedly woundes so soze smere  
His mantel ouir his hippes cast he  
For no man sholde se his preynte

As he lay in dyng on a traunce  
 And wist verily that dye shoulde he  
 Of honesty yet hadde he remembraunce  
 Lucan to the this story I recomende  
 And to Iweton and to Balery also  
 That of this story Writen worde and ende  
 How that these conqueroures two  
 Fortune was first a frende and sithen a fo  
 Roman truste vpon her fauoure longe  
 But haue her in a wayte for euirmoo  
 Wytnes on al the conqueroures stronge

O Noble o worthy petro glory of spayne  
 Whom fortune helde so high in magesty  
 Wele ought men thy pytous deth compleyne  
 Dute of thy sonde thy Brothel made the fle  
 And after at a siege by subtelty  
 Thou were betrayed and ladde vp to his tent  
 Where as he with his owne honde slough the  
 Succeedyng in thy regne and in thy rent

The felde of snowe with the eggle of blache therin  
 Caught with the lymerode coloured as a gleden  
 He brewe this cursydnes and al this synne  
 The wyched nest was werke of this nede  
 Nat charles olyueze that toke ay hede  
 Of trouthe and honoure. But of armoryke  
 Genelon olyuere corrupt for mede  
 Brought this worthy kyng in suche a bryke

O worthy petro kyng of cypre also  
 That Ali saundie wan by high maystrye  
 Ful many an hethen wroughtest thou ful wo  
 Of whiche thy owne lieges hadde enuye  
 And for no thyng but for thy cheualry  
 They in thy bedde haue slayn the by the morowe



## The Monkes tale

Thus can fortune wele gouerne and gye  
And oute of ioye bryng men to sorowe

t He riche cresus whilom kynng of lyde

Of whiche cresus cyrus sore him dradde

yet was he caught amyd alle his pryde

And to brenne men to the fyre him ladde

But suche a rayn down fro the firmament shadde

That queynte the fyre and made him to scape

But to be waze yet no grace he hadde

Thyl fortune on the galowes made him gape

Whan he escaped was he coude nat stynt

For to begynne a newe array agayn

He wende wele for that fortune him sent

Suche happe that he escaped through the rayne

That of his foos he myght nat be stayn

And eke a sweyn vpon a nyght he mette

Of whiche he was so proude and so fayn

That in vengeaunce he alle his herte set

Vpon a tre he was as him thoughte

There iupiter him wesshe bothe backe and syde

And phebus eke a fayre towel him brought

To dry him with and therewith weyt his pryde

And to his doughter that stode him besyde

Whiche that he knewe in high sentence habounded

He badde her telle what it signyfied

And she his dremps right thus expownded

The tre quod she the galowes is to mene

And iupiter betokeneth snowe and rayne

And phebus with his towel so cleane

Betokeneth the sonne hemys soth to sayn

Thou shalt an hanged be fader certayn

Rayn shal the wasshe and sonne shal the drye

Thus she warnyd him ful plat and ful playn

His doughter that called was phanye

## The Monkes tale

An hangyd was cressus the proude knyght  
His ryalle trone myght him nat auayle  
Tragedy is noon other maner thyng  
Ne can in synng cryng ne be wayle  
But for that fortune alday wyl assayle  
With vnware stroke the regnes that be proude  
For whan men trust in her than wol she fayle  
And couir her bright face vndre a cloude

Here endith the tale of the monke  
And begynneth the prologue  
Of the Monnes preest

¶ Quod the knyght gode sir no more of this  
That ye haue sayd is right ynough ywys  
And mekyl more for lytel heynnes  
Is right ynough to mekyl folke I gesse  
I say for me it is a grete disease  
Where as men haue be in welthe and case  
To here of their soden falle alas  
And the contrarie is iope and solas  
As whan a man hath be in poure estate  
And clymbeth vp and weyeth fortunate  
And there abideth in prosperite  
Suche thyng is gladsom as thynketh me  
And of suche thyng were gode for to telle  
ye quod oure hoost by seint poules belle  
ye say right soth this monke clappith loude  
He spake how fortune couered with a cloude  
I wot neuir what. and als of a tragedy  
Right now ye herd and parde no remedy  
It is for to be wayle ne compleyne  
That. that is doon. and eke it is a peyne



## The Monkes tale

As ye haue seyd to here of heupnes  
Sir monke no more of this so god you blesse  
poure tale anopeth alle this comoany  
Suche talkyng is nat worth a butter flye  
For therein is no disporte ne game  
Wherfore sir monke or dan piers by your name  
I pray you hartely telle vs somwhat elles  
For sikerly ner clynkyng of your belles  
That on your brydel hang on euery syde  
By heupnyng that for vs alle deyde  
I shorde or this haue fallen down for slepe  
Alle though the slough hadde neuiz be so depe  
Than hadde your tale alle be tolde in beryn  
For certaynly as that the se clerkes sayn  
Where as a man may haue none audience  
Nat helpith it to telle his sentence  
And wele I wote the substaunce is in me  
If any thyng shalle wele reported be  
Sir say somwhat of huntynge I you pray  
My quod this monke I haue nolyt to pley  
Now let a nother telle as I haue tolde  
Than spake oure hoost with rude speche and bolde  
And sayd to the nonnes preest anon  
Come nere thou preest come hydez thou sir John  
Tel vs suche thyng as may oure hertes glade  
Be blythe though thou ryde vpon a iade  
What though thy horse be foule and lene  
If he wol serue the recke the nat a bene  
Loke that thy hert be mery euir mo  
yes sir quod he yes hoost so moot I go  
But I be mery y wys I wol be blamed  
And right anoon his tale he hath attampd  
And thus he sayd vnto vs euerichone

# The tale of the nonnes preest

This swete preest this godely man sir John

Here endith the prologue of the nonnes preest  
And begynneth his tale



a poure wydowe somdele y stept in age  
Was somtyme duellyng in a cotage  
Besyde a groue stondyng in a dale  
This wydowe of whiche I telle you my tale  
Sithen that day that she was last a wyf  
In pacience ledde a ful symple lyf  
For lytel was her catel and her rent  
By husbondry of suche as god her sent  
She fonde her self and eke her doughtren two  
Thre large sowes hadde she and no moo  
Thre kyne and eke a shepe that hight malle  
Wele soty was her boure and eke her halke  
In whiche she ete many a slender mele



## The tale of the Nonnes prest

Of poynaunt sawce ne knewe she neuir a deel  
Ne depnte morcel passed through her throte  
Her dyet was accordaunt to her cote  
Repleccioun ne made her neutz seke  
A temperat dyet was her phisik  
And excercise and hertis suffisaunce  
The gowte leet her nothyng for to daunce  
Ne apoplexie shent nat her hede  
No wyne ne dranke she neyther white ne rede  
Her lord was moost seruyd with white and blak  
Applike and broun brede in whiche she fonde no lak  
Seynd. Bacon and somtym an egg or twey  
And she was as it wer a maner dey  
A yerd she hadde enclosed alle aboute  
With styches and dry dyched withoute  
In whiche she hadde a cocke hight chaunteclere  
In alle the lond of crowyng nas his pere  
His boyce was meriaz than the mery organ  
On masse dayes that in the churches goon  
Wele spherer was his crowyng in his loge  
Than is a cloke or in any abbey an orloge  
By nature he crewe eche assencion  
Of the equynoccion in the town  
For whan degrees syftene were ascendyd  
Than crewe he that it myght nat be amended  
His come was reder than the fyne coralle  
And battelyd as it hadde be a castel walle  
His byl was blake as any gete it shone  
Lyke a sure were his legges and his toon  
His nayles whytter than the lily floure  
And lyke the burnyd golde was his coloure  
This gentyl cok had in his gouernaunce  
Seuyn hennys to do alle his plesaunce

## The tale of the nonnes preest

Whiche were his susters and his paramoures  
And wondre lyke to him as of coloures  
Of whiche the fayrest he wed in the throte  
Was cleppd fayre damysel parlote  
He fethred her an hundred tyme a day  
And she him pleisith alle that euil she may  
Curteys she was discrete and debonayre  
And compenable and her self so fayre  
Sithen the tyme that she was seyn nyght old  
That trulpy she hath the hert in holde  
Of chauntecleres lokyng in euery lith  
He louyd her so that wele was him ther with  
But suche a ioye it was to here them synge  
Whan the bright sone gan to spryng  
In swete accorde my leef is fer in lond  
For that tyme as I haue vnderstonde  
Bestys and byrdes coude speke and synge  
And it so fyl that in the dawnyng  
As chaunteclere among his byues alle  
Sat on his perche that was in the halles  
And nexte him sat his fayre parlote  
This chaunteclere gan to grone in his throte  
As a man in his dreame is dretchyd sore  
And whan that parlote thus herde him rore  
She was agast and sayd hert dere  
What ayleth you to grone in this manere  
Ye be a very slepar fy for shame  
And he aunswerd thus and sayd madame  
I pray you that ye take it nat in greif  
By god I mette I was in suche myscheif  
Right now that yet myn hert is sore a frighe  
Now god quod he my sweyn retche a right  
And kepe my body oute of foule pryson



## The tale of the Nonnes preeft

Me mette that I roumed by and doun  
Within oure yerde where I saue a best  
Was lyke an hounde and wolde haue made a rest  
Upon my body and wolde haue hadde me dede  
His coloure was betwyte yelow and rede  
And tyyyyd was his tayle and bothe his eris  
With blake bnyke the remenaunt of his heris  
His snowte smalle with glowyng eyen tway  
yet for his loke almost for fere I dey  
This causith me my gromyng doutles  
Abov quod she fy for shame hertles  
Allas quod she for by god aboue  
Now haue ye lost myn hert and al my loue  
I can nat loue a cowerd by my seyth  
For certis what so any woman sayth  
We alle desire if it myght be  
To haue husbondes hardy wyse and fre  
And secrete and none negarde ne no fool  
Ne him that is agast of euery tool  
Ne none anauntour by that god aboue  
How durst ye say for shame vnto pouze loue  
That any thyng myght make thou a ferde  
Haue ye no mannes hert and haue a berde  
Allas and can ye be a ferde of sweynnes  
No thyng but banyte god wote in sweyn is  
Sweynnes been engendred of replections  
And of fume and of complexions  
Whan humoures been to habundaunt in a wight  
Certis this dreame whiche ye haue mette to nyght  
I telle you trouthe ye may trust me  
Cometh of superfluyte and rede coler parde  
Whiche cause folke to drede in theire dremys  
Of arrows and of fyre with rede lemys

## The tale of the Nonnes preest

Of rede bestys that wol them byte  
Of contyke and of waspes grete and lyte  
Right as the humoure of melancoly  
Causeth many a man in slepe to cry  
For fere of grete boles and berys blake  
Or elles blake deuyles wol them take  
Of othez humoures coude I telle also  
That worke a man in slepe mekyl wo  
But I wol passe as lyghtly as I can  
Locaton whiche that was so wyse a man  
Sayde he nat thus do no force of dremps  
Now sir quod she whan we fle fro the bempys  
For goddes loue as takith som layatpf  
Upon peryl of my soule and of my lyf  
I counsel you the best I wol nat lye  
That bothe of coler and of melancoly  
ye purge you and for ye shal nat tary  
Though in this toun be none appotecary  
I shal my self two herbes teche you  
That shal be for your hele and for your prow  
And in oure yerde tho herbes shal I fynde  
The whiche haue of theiꝝ properte by kynde  
To purge you beneth and eke aboue  
Forget nat this for goddes owne loue  
ye be right colorph of complexioun  
Where the sonne is in his ascencioun  
Ne fynde you nat replete of humoures hote  
For if ye do I dar wele lay a grote  
Than ye shal haue a feyꝝ tercian  
Or elles an agge we that may be your bane  
A day or two ye shalle haue digestyues  
Of wormes or ye take your layatyps  
Of laureal centory and of fumetere



In hoc mundo

In hoc mundo

In hoc mundo

In hoc mundo

Of elles of the elderberies that growyn there  
 Of catapuce or of gaytres berpes  
 Of herbe Jue growyng in oure yerde that mery is  
 Pluche them bp as they growe and ete them in  
 Be mery husbonde for your fader kyn  
 Dredith no dre me I can say you no more  
 Madame quod he gramercy of your loze  
 But natheles as touchyng dan catoun  
 That of wysdome hath suche a grete renoun  
 Though he hadde no dremes for to drede  
 By god men may in olde bokes rede  
 Of many a man more of auctorite  
 Than euir dan catoun was so moot I the  
 That alle the reuers sayth of his sentence  
 And haue wele founde by experie nce  
 That dremys be significaciouns  
 As wele of ioye as of tribulaciouns  
 That folke endure in this lyf present  
 There nedith to make of this none argument  
 The very preef she with it in dede  
 One of the gretest auctoures that men rede  
 Sayth thus that somtyme two felowes went  
 On pylgramage in ful gode entent  
 And hapned so they cam in a toun  
 Where as ther was suche congregacioun  
 Of people and eke of strait herbigage  
 That they ne fonde as mehyl as a cotage  
 In whiche they bothe myght ylogyd be  
 Wherfore they must of necessite  
 As for that nyght departe company  
 And eche of them goth to his hostre  
 And toke his lottynge as it wolde falle  
 That one of them was lottyd in a stalle

## The tale of the Nonnes preest

ferre in the yerde With oxe of the plow  
That other man was logyd wele ynow  
As was his auenture oz his fortune  
That he gouerneth alle as in comune  
And so it besyl long oz it were day  
This man mette in his bedde there he lay  
How that his felowe gan vpon him calle  
And sayd alas for in an oyes stalle  
This nyght shal I be murdered there I ly  
Now helpe me dere Brother oz I dye  
In alle the haste come to me he sayd  
This man oute his slepe for fere abrayde  
And whan he was waked of his slepe  
He turned him and toke of this no kepe  
Him thought his dreame was but a banyte  
Thus twyse in his slepe dremyd he  
And at the thridde tyme yet his felawe  
Cam as him thought and sayde I am now slaw  
Beholde my bloody woundes depe and wyde  
Arise vp arely in the morowe tyde  
And at the west gate of the toun quod he  
A carte ful of dung there shalt thou se  
In whiche my body is hydde fulle pryuely  
Do that cart arest holdy  
My gold causyd my deth soth to sayn  
And tolde him euery poynt how he was slayn  
With a fulle pytous face pale of he we  
And trust wele his dreame he fonde right trewe  
For on the morowe as sone as it was day  
To his felowes ynn he toke the wey  
And whan that he cam to the oyes stalle  
After his felow he gan to calle  
The hosteller aunswerd him anon



## The tale of the Nonnes preest

And sayd sir youre felow is goon  
As sone as day he went out of the toun  
This man gan fal in suspencion  
Remembryng of his dremps that he mette  
And forth he goth no lenger wolde he let  
Vnto the west gate of the toun and fonde  
A dong carte as it were to dong londe  
That was arayed in the same wyse  
As ye haue herde the dede man deuyse  
And with hardy hert he gan to crye  
Vengeaunce and iustice of this felony  
My felowe murdered is this same nyght  
And in this carte he lyeth gappng by right  
I crye oute on the mynistres quod he  
That sholde kepe and rule this cyte  
Barow allas here lyeth my felowe slayn  
What sholde I more of this tale sayn  
The peple oute stert and cast the carte to grounde  
And in the myddel of the donge they fonde  
The dede man than murdered was al newe  
O blisful god that art so gode and trewe  
Lo how that thou be wrapest murdre alwey  
Murdre wol oute that se we day by day  
Murdre is so waltfom and abhomynable  
To god that so iuste is and resonable  
That he ne wol it suffre helyd to be  
Though it abyde a yere or two or thre  
Murdre wol oute this is my conclusioun  
And right anon the mynisters of the toun  
Haue hent the carter and so sore him pynded  
And eke the hosteller so sore entyned  
That they behewe theire wychednes anon  
And were anhangyd by the necke soon

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Here may ye se that dremps be to drede  
And certis in the same lyf I rede  
Right in the nexte chaptre after this  
I gabbe nat so haue I ioye and blys  
t Wo men that wolde haue passed ouir the see  
For certayn causes in a fer countre  
If the Wynde ne hadde be contrarye  
That made them in a cyte to tary  
That stode ful mery vpon an haupn syde  
But on a day ayenst an euyn tyde  
The Wynde gan chaunge and blewe as himlest  
Joly and glade they wenten to rest  
And cast them ful erely for to sayle  
But herkyne to one man fylle a grete meruayle  
That one of them in slepyng as he lay  
He mette a wondre dreme agan the day  
Him thought a man stode by his beddes syde  
And him comaunded that he sholde abyde  
And sayd him thus if thou to morowe wende  
Thou shalt be drent my tale is at an ende  
He woke and tolde his felaue what he mette  
And prayde him his biage for to lette  
As for that day he prayde him for to abyde  
His felaue that lay by his beddes syde  
Gan for to laughe and scorned him fulle faste  
No dreme quod he may so my hert agast  
That I wol let for to do my thynges  
I set nat a strawe for thy drempnynges  
For sweuennes be but wanytees and iapes  
Men mete alday of oules and of apes  
And eke of many a mase therwith alle  
And dreme of thyng that neuir was ne shalle  
But sitthen I se that thou wol here abyde



## The tale of the Nonnes preest

And thus flouthen Wylfully the tyde  
God wote it reWith me fulle soze and haue gode day  
And thus he toke his leue and went his way  
But or he hadde half his course y sayled  
I nat why ne what myschaunce it ayled  
But casually the shippes botom to rent  
And ship and man vndre the water went  
In sight of othez shippes besyde  
That with him sayled at the same tyde  
And therfore sayre partelot so dere  
By suche ensamples olde mayst thou here  
That no man sholde be to rechelesse  
Of dremps for I say the doutles  
That many a dreme ful soze is for to drede  
Lo in the lyf of seint kenelme I rede  
That was henulphus sone the noble kyng  
Of meriturph how kenelme met a thyng  
A lytel or he were murdered on a day  
His murdre in his visioun he say  
His nozice him expounded it euery dele  
His sweyn and bad him hepe him wele  
Iro treson but he was but seyn pere olde  
And therfore lytel tale he hath therof tolde  
Of any dreme so holy was his herte  
By god I hadde leuyr than my sherte  
That ye had herde his legende as haue I  
Dame partlot I say to you trulpy  
Macrobius that writeth the a visioun  
In affryke of the worthy scypion  
Assermyth dremps and sayth that they been  
Warnyng of the thynges that we after seen  
And ferthermore I pray you lohit wele  
In the osde testament of danyel

## The tale of the Nonnes preest

If he held dremps any banyte  
Rede eke of Joseph and there shal ye se  
Wondres been somtyme but I say nat alle  
Warnyng of thynges that shal after falle  
Lo of egypt the kyng that hight pharo  
His baker and his hoteller also  
Whether they felt none effect in dremps  
Who so wol seke actes of sondry reamps  
May rede of dremes a wondre thyng  
Croesus whiche was of Lyde kyng  
Mette he nat that he sat vpon a tre  
Whiche signified he sholde hanged be  
Lo Andrometa Hectoures wyf  
That day that Hectour sholde lese his lyf  
She drempd in the same nyght biforn  
How that the lyf of Hectoure sholde be lorn  
If that day he went vnto batayle  
She warnyd him but it myght nat auayle  
He went for to fight natheles  
But he was slayn anon of achilles  
But that tale is to long to telle  
And eke it is nyght day I may nat duelle  
Shortly I say as for conclusioun  
That I shalle haue of this anysioun  
Aduersite and I say furthermore  
That I ne telle of layatpues no store  
For they be benemous I wote it wel  
I them diffy I loue them neuiz a deel  
But now let vs speke of myrthe and stynt al this  
Madame partlote so haue I blys  
Of one thyng god hath me sent large grace  
For whan I se the beaute of your face  
Ye be so scarlet rede aboute your eyen



## The tale of the Nonnes preest

It makith al my drede for to dven  
For also sykez as in principio  
Mulier est hominis confusio  
Madame the sentence of this latyn is  
Woman is mannes ioye and his blysse  
For when I fele on nyght your soft syde  
Al be it that I may nat on you ryde  
For that oure perche is made so narrow alas  
I am so ful of ioy and of solas  
That I diffy bothe sweene and dreme  
And with that worde he fyl down fro the beme  
For it was day and eke his hennys alle  
And with a chuk he gan them for to calle  
For he hadde founde a corne lay in the yerde  
Byalle he was and he no man aferde  
He fedred partelote twenty tyme  
And trade her eke as ofte oz it was pryde  
He loketh as he were a trympoun  
And on his toos he rometh by and down  
Him deynd nat to set his feet to grounde  
And chucked whan he hadde a corne y founde  
And to him ran his wyues alle  
As byalle as a prync in his halle  
Leue I this chaunteclere in his pasture  
And after wol I telle of his aventure  
Whan the moneth in the whiche the worlde began  
That hight Marche that god first made man  
Was complete and passyd were also  
Sithen Marche began twenty daies and two  
Besyl that chaunteclere in alle his pryde  
His seyn hennys walkyng him besyde  
Cast by his eyen to the bright sonne  
That in the signe of taurus was y ronne

Fourty degrees and one and somwhat more  
 He knewe by kynde and by noon other lore  
 That it was pryme and crewe With a blissful steurn  
 The sonne he sayde is clombe bp to heurn  
 Fourty degrees and one and somwat more ywys  
 Madame partlote my worlde's blys  
 Herkyn how this blissful byrdes syng  
 And se the fresshe floures how they spryng  
 Ful is myn herte of reuel and solas  
 But sodenly him fyl a sozonful caas  
 For euir the lattre ende of ioye is woo  
 God wot that worldly ioye is sone ago  
 And if a rethoure coude fayre endite  
 He in a cronycle myght sauely wryte  
 As for a souerayn notabilite  
 Now euery wiseman herkyn to me  
 This stoyr is also trewe I vndertake  
 As is the boke of Launcelot de lake  
 That women holde in ful grete reuerence  
 Now wol I turne apen to my sentence  
 A col fox ful of sight and iniquyte  
 That in the groue hadde woned yeres thre  
 By high ymaginacion aforncast  
 The same nyght through the hedghe brast  
 Into the yerde there chaunteclere the fayre  
 Was wont and eke his wyues to repayre  
 And in a bedde of wortes styll he lay  
 Tyl it was past vndren of the day  
 Waytyng his tyme on chaunteclere to falle  
 As gladelly doon these homycides alle  
 That in a waytepytche to murdre men  
 A false murdrez ruckyn in the den  
 A new scariot and newe genesion



## The tale of the Nonnes preest

False dissimyloure o greke Synon  
That broughdest troye bitterly to sorowe  
O claunteclere acursed be the morow  
That thou in the yerde fley fro the bemyng  
Thou were ful wele warnyd by thy dremyng  
That ilke day was perilous to the  
But what that god afore wote must nedes be  
After the opunyon of certayn clerkes  
Wytnes of him that any clerke is  
That in scole is grete alteracioun  
In this matere and grete disputacioun  
And hath been of an hundred thousand men  
But I ne can nat bulke it to the brenne  
As can the holy doctoure augustyn  
Or boece or the bisschop bradwardyn  
Whethyr that goddes worthy fore wetynge  
Streyneth me nedely to do a thyng  
Nedely clepe I symple necessite  
Or if the fre choos be graunted me  
To do that same thyng or do it nought  
Though god fore wote it or it was wrought  
Or if his wyttynge streyneth neuer a dele  
But by necessite condicioneel  
I wol nat haue doon in suche matere  
My tale is of a cok as ye shal here  
That toke his counseyl of his wyf with sorowe  
To walke in the yerde vpon the morowe  
That he hadde met his dreame as I you tolde  
Womens councelles been ful oft colde  
Wymens counceyl brought vs first to wo  
And made Adam from paradise to go  
There as he was ful mery and wele at ease  
But for I not whom I myght displease

## The tale of the Nonnes preest

If I counceyl of Women wolde blame  
Passe ouir for I sayde it in my game  
Redith auctouzes Where they trete of suche matere  
And what they say of Women ye may here  
These been these coches wordes and nat myn  
I can no harme of no Woman deuyne  
Frayre in the sonde to bathe hez merily  
Pyeth partelot and al hez susters by  
Apenst the sonne and chaunteclere so fre  
Sang meriaz than the mazmayde in the see  
For phisologus sayth btterly  
How that they songe wele and merely  
And so besyl as he cast his eye  
Among the wortes on a butterflye  
He was ware of this foy that lay ful lowe  
No thyng than lust him to crowe  
But cryed anoon coke cok and bp he stert  
As man that was a frayde in his hert  
For naturallly a best desireth to fle  
Fro his contrary if he may it se  
Though he neuir hadde seen it erst with his eye  
This chaunteclere whan he gan him aspy  
He wolde haue fledde but that the foy anon  
Sayd gentyl sir allas what wyl ye doon  
Be ye a frayde of me that am youre frende  
Now certis I were wers than a feend  
If I to you wolde harme or belony  
I am nat come youre counseyl to aspye  
But truly the cause of my comyng  
Was only to here how ye syng  
For truly ye haue as mery a steupn  
As any aungel hath that is in heuyn  
Therwith ye haue of musyke more felyng



## The tale of the Nonnes preest

Than hadde boete or any that can synge  
My lord your fader god his soule blesse  
And eke your modre of her gentylnes  
Haue in my house be to my grete ease  
And certis sir ful fayne wolde I you please  
But for men speke of syngeynge I wolde say  
Somoot I brouke wele myn eyen tway  
Saue you ne herd I neur man so synge  
As dyd your fader in the mornynge  
Certis it was of herte alle the song  
And for to make his voyce the more strong  
He wolde so peyne him that with bothe his eyen  
He must swynke so loude he must cryen  
And stonde vpon his typtoos therwithalle  
And stretch forth his necke long and smalle  
And eke he was of suche discrecioun  
That ther was no man in no regioun  
That him in song or wysdome myght passe  
I haue wele redde dan burnel the asse  
Among his berse how that there was a cok  
For that a prestes sone gaue him a knoke  
Vpon his legges whiche he was yong and nyce  
He made him for to lese his benefice  
But certeyn there is no comparison  
Betwyte the wysdome and discrecioun  
Of your fader and of his subtelte  
Now syngeith sir for seint charite  
Let se can ye your fadre countrefete  
This chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete  
As man that coude nat his treason aspye  
So was he rauysshed with his flaterie  
Alas ye lordes many a false flateroure  
Is in your courte and many a false losyngeour

## The tale of the Nonnes preest

That please you moche more by my feyth  
Than he that sothfastnes vnto sayth  
Redith ecclesiaste of flaterie  
Be ware ye lordes of theire trechery  
This chaunteclere stood vpon his toos  
Stretchyng his necke and helde his eyncloos  
And gan to crowe loude for the nones  
And dan russel the fox stert vp at onys  
And be gorget hent chaunteclere  
And on his bake toward the wode him bere  
And yet was ther no man that him sued  
Desteny that mayst nat be eschewed  
Alas that chaunteclere flewe fro the bemys  
Allas his wyf fraught nat of dremys  
And on a fryday fyl alle this myschaunce  
O Venus that art goddes of plesaunce  
Sithen that thy seruant was this chaunteclere  
And in thy seruyce dyd alle his powez  
More for desyte than the worlde to multiply  
Why woldest thou suffre him thy day to dye  
O gaufride dere mayster souerayn  
That whan the worthy kyng Richard was slayn  
With shot compleyndest his deth so soze  
Why ne hadde I thy science and thy loze  
The friday for to chyde as dyd ye  
For on a friday shortly slayn was he  
Than wolde I shewe you how that I coude pleyne  
For chaunteclere drede and for his peyne  
Certis suche crye ne lamentacioun  
Nas neuiz of ladies made whan that Iliou  
Was wonne. and pirzus with his bright swerde  
Whan he hent kyng pryame by the berde  
And flewe him as sayth eneydos



## The tale of the Nonnes preest

As made al the hennys in the cloos  
When that they hadde of chaunteclere the sight  
But souerainly dame partelote shright  
ful lowder than dyd hasdrubales wyf  
Whan that her husbonde had lost his lyf  
And that the Romaynes hadde brent cartage  
She was so ful of tument and of rage  
That wylfully into the fyre she stert  
And brent her self with a stedfast hert  
O woful hennys right so cryden ye  
As whan that nero brent the cyte  
Of Rome cryde the senatoures wyues  
For that thei husbondes sholde lese thei lyues  
Withouten gylt nero hath them slayn  
Now wol I turne to my tale agayn  
This sely wydowe and her doughters two  
Berde the hennes crye and make wo  
And oute at the dore stert they anoon  
And sawe the fox towarde the wode goon  
And bare vpon his baके the cocke a wey  
Any cryde oute and harowe and wela wey  
A ha the fox and after him they ran  
And eke with staues many an othe man  
Ran colle oure dogge talbot and garlond  
And makyn with her distaf in her honde  
Ran cow and calf and eke the the very hogges  
For they so sore a ferde were of the dogges  
And shoutyng of men and of women eke  
They ran so theire hert thought to breke  
They pellen as feendes doon in helle  
The dokes cryde as men wolde them quelle  
The gees for fere ouir the trees  
Oute of the hyues the swarme of bees

## The tale of the Nonnes preest

So hidous was the noyse a benedicite  
Certis Iacke straue ne his menye  
Ne made neuir shoutes half so shrille  
Whan that they wolde any flemyng kylle  
As that day was made vpon the foy  
Of bras they blewe the trompes and of boy  
Of horn and bone in which they blewe and poupyd  
And therewith they shrieked and shoutyd  
It semyd as though heuyn sholde falle  
Now gode men I pray you herhyn alle  
Lo how fortune turneth sodenly  
The hope and the pryde of her enmye  
This coke that lay vpon the foyes backe  
In alle his dride vnto the foy he spake  
And sayd sir if I were as ye  
yet shoulde I say as wys god helpe me  
Turneth aye ye proude chorles alle  
A very pestilence vpon you falle  
Now am I come vnto this wode syde  
Maugre your hede the coke shal here abyde  
I wyl him ete in feyth and that anoon  
The foy aunswerd in feyth it shalbe doon  
And as he spake the worde alle sodenly  
This coke brake from his mouthe deliuerly  
And high vpon a tre he flewe anoon  
And whan the foy saue that he was goon  
Allas quod he ochaunteclere alas  
I haue quod he do to you grete tre spaas  
In as moche as I made you a ferde  
When I you hent and brought oute of youre perde  
But sir I dyd it nat in no wyched entent  
Come down and I shal telle you what I ment  
I shalle you say soth god helpe me so



## The tale of the Nonnes preest

May than quod he I shrewe vs both two  
And first I shrewe my self bothe blode and bones  
If thou begyle me ofter than ones  
Thou shalt nomore with thy flattery  
Do me syng with a wyngyng eye  
For he that wyngeth when he sholde se  
Al wyffully god let him neuir the  
May quod the foy but god geue him myschaunce  
That is so indiscrete of gouernaunce  
That iangeleth whan he sholde holde his pees  
So suche it is for to be recheles  
And neglegent and truste on flattery  
And ye that holde this tale a foly  
As of a foy and a cocke and an henne  
Takith the moralite good men  
For seint poule sayth alle that writen is  
To oure doctrine it is writen y wys  
Takith the fruyte and let the chaffe be styll  
Now gode god if that it be thy wyll  
As saythe my lorde god make vs alle gode men  
And bryng vs to thy high blyss amen

Here begynneth the maniciples prologue  
f Or nonnes preest oure hoost sayde a noon  
y blessed be thy breche and euery stoon  
This a mery tale of chaunteclere  
But by my trowth if thou were seculere  
Thou woldest be a tredfoule a right  
For if thou haue corage as thou hast myght  
The were nede of hennes as I wene  
ye more than seupn tymes seuentene  
Se whiche braunes hath this hentyl preest  
So grete a necke and suche a large brest  
He lokith as a sparhaue with his eyen

## The manciples prologue

Him nedith nat his coloure for to dreyne  
With brasyl ne with grayn of portyngeale  
But sir sayre falle you for your tale  
And after that he with ful mery chere  
Sayd vnto an man as ye shalle here  
Wot ye nat where there stondith a lytel town  
Whiche that is clepyd Bobbys and don  
Vndre the blee in caunterbery way  
There gan our hoost to iape and to pley  
And sayd sires what dun is in the myre  
Is there no man for prayere ne for hyre  
That wol awake our felow behynde  
A theef myght him ful lyghtly robbe and bynde  
Se how he nappith se for cookes bones  
How he wol falle from his horse at onys  
Is that a coke of london with myschaunce  
Do him comfort he knowith his penaunce  
For he shalle tel a tale by my fay  
Al though it be nat worth a botel hay  
Awake thou coke quod he god gyue the sorowe  
What ayleth the to slepe by the morowe  
Hast thou hadde fleen al nyght or art thou dronke  
Or hast thou al nyght with somme quene yswonke  
So that thou mayst nat holde by thy hede  
This cook that was ful pale and nothyng rede  
Sayde our hoost so god my soule blesse  
There is falle on me grete heuynes  
Nat I nat why me were leuer to slepe  
Then the best galon of wyne in chepe  
Wele quod the manciple if may do the ease  
To the sir coke and to no wight wight displease  
Whiche that here ryde in this company  
And if our hoost wol of his curtesy



I wol as now excuse the of thy tale  
 For in gode feyth thy bysage is ful pale  
 Thy eyen dasawen sothtly as me thynketh  
 And wele I wote thy breth ful soure stynketh  
 That she with wele thou art nat wele disposed  
 Of me certayn thou shalt nat be glosed  
 Se how he galpith. lo this drunken wight  
 As though he wolde vs swelow anoon right  
 Holde cloos thy mouthe for thy fader kyn  
 The deupl of helle set his fote therin  
 Thy cursed breth wol infecte vs alle  
 Fy stynkyng swyne fy foule moot the be falle  
 Takith hede sires of this lusty man  
 Now swete sir wol ye iuste at the ban  
 Therto me thynketh ye be wele shape  
 I trowe that ye haue dronke wyne ape  
 And that is whan men pley at the strawe  
 And with his speche the cook weyed al wraue  
 And on the manciple he gan to nodde fast  
 For lacke of speche a down the horse him cast  
 Where as he lay tyl that men him by toke  
 This was a fayre cheuesauce of a cook  
 Allas that he ne hadde holde him by his ladyll  
 And oz that he aye were in his ladyll  
 There was a grete shouyng bothe to and fro  
 To lyft him by and mekyl care and wo  
 So brweldy was this sely palled goost  
 And to the manciple than spake oure hoost  
 Bicause that drynke hath dominacioun  
 Upon this man. by my sauacioun  
 I trowe lewdely wol he telle his tale  
 For were it wyne oz olde moyste ale  
 That he hath dronke he spekith so in his nose

## The manciples prologue

And fneſith faſt and eke he hath the poſe  
He hath alſo to do more than ynough  
To kepe him on his caple oute of the ſlough  
And if he falle from his caple i ſtſone  
Than ſhal we alle haue ynough to done  
By lyſtyng by his dronken corps  
Tel on thy tale of him make I no force  
But yet manciple in ſeyth thou arte to nyce  
Thus openly to reprove him of his byce  
Another day he wol parauenture  
Reclayne the and bryng the to lure  
I mene he ſpeke wyl of ſmale thynges  
And for to pynche at thy recknynges  
That were nat honeſt if it cam to the preef  
No quod the maunciple that were a grette myſchief  
So myght he bryng me in to the ſnare  
yet haode I leuez pay for the mare  
Whiche he rideth on than he ſholde with me ſtryue  
I wol nat wrathe him ſo moot I thryue  
That I ſpake I ſayde it but in bourde  
And wote ye what I haue here in my gourde  
A draught of wyne ye of a rype grape  
And right anoon ye ſhal ſe a gode iape  
This cook ſhal drynke therof if that I may  
By payne of my lyf he wol nat ſay nay  
And certaynly to telle as it was  
Of this beſſel the cook dranke faſt alas  
What nedith it he dranke ynough biſorn  
And whan he hadde poupyd in his horn  
To the manciple he toke the gourde agayn  
And of the drynke the cooke was ful fayn  
And thanked him in ſuche wyſe as he coude  
Than gan oure hoost to laughe wondre loude



## The manciples tale

And sayde I se wele it is necessary  
Where that we goon gode drynke with vs to cary  
For that wol turne rancor and disease  
To accorde and loue and many a worde to pease  
O bacus y blissed be thy holy name  
That so canst turne earnest into game  
Worship and thanke be to thy deyte  
Of that matere ye gete no more of me  
Tel on thy tale thou manciple I the pray  
Wele sir quod he herkneth what I say

Here endith the manciples prologue  
And begynneth his tale



Whan phebus duellyd here in erthe a doun  
As olde bokes maken mencion  
He was the moost lusty bachelere  
Of alle the worlde and eke the best archere  
He slewe pheton the serpent as he lay  
Slepyng ayenst the sonne bpon a day  
And many a nother noble worthy dede

## The manciples tale

He With his Bowe Wrought as men may rede  
Plepe he coude on euery mynstralcye  
And syngen that it was a melody  
To here of his clere voyce the soun  
Certis the kynge of Thebes amphioun  
That With his song walled the cite  
Coude neuiz syng half so wele as he  
Therto he was the semelpest man  
That is or was sithen the worlde began  
What nedith it his feture to discryue  
For in this worlde was there no man so fayre alpye  
He was ther With fulfpylled of gentylnes  
Of honoure and of parfytte worthynes  
This phebus that was floure of bachelery  
As wele in fredom as in cheualry  
For his disporte in signe eke of victory  
Of pheton so as tellith vs the story  
was wont to here in his honde a bowe  
Now hadde this phebus in his house a crowe  
Within a cage y fostryd many a day  
And taughte it speke as men teche a iay  
White was this crowe as is a mylke whyte swan  
And countrefetyd the speche of euery man  
He coude whan he shulde telle a tale  
There was in alle this worlde no nyghtyngale  
Ne coude by an hundred thousand dele  
Synge so wonderly merily and wele  
Now hadde this phebus in his house a wyf  
Whiche that he louyd more than his lyf  
And nyght and day dyd euiz his diligence  
For to please and do her reuerence  
Saue only the soth if I shalle sayn  
Jelous he was and wolde haue kept her fayne



## The manicles tale

For him were lothe iaped for to be  
And so is euery wight in suche degre  
But al for naught for it auyled nought  
A gode wyf that is cleue of werke and thought  
Sholde nat be kept in noon a wayte certayn  
And truly the labour is in beyn  
To kepe a shewe for it wol nat be  
This holde I for a veray nyete  
To spylle labour for to kepe wyues  
Thus writen olde clerkes in their lyues  
But now to purpos as I first began  
This worthy phebys doth alle that he can  
To plesen her wenyng through suche plesaunce  
And for his manhode and for his gouernaunce  
That no man sholde put him fro her grace  
But god it wote there may no man embrace  
As to distreyne a thyng whiche that nature  
Hath naturally set in a creature  
Take any byrde and put him in a cage  
And do alle thyng entent and thy corage  
To fostre it tenderly with mete and drynke  
Of al depntees that thou canst be thy nke  
And kepe it also clenly as thou may  
Al though his cage of golde be neuir so gay  
Yet hath this byrde by twenty thousand folde  
Reuer in a forest that is wyld and colde  
Goete wormes and suche wrechidnesse  
For euir this byrde wol do his besynesse  
To a scape oute of his cage whan he may  
His liberte the byrde desireth ay  
Let take a cat and fostre her with mylke  
And tendre flesshe and make her couche of silke  
And let her se a mouse go by the walle

## The manciples tale

Anoon she weyueth flesshe and couche and al  
And euery deynthe that is in that house  
Suche appetyte hath she to ete the mous  
To here hath lust his domynacioun  
And appetyte flemyth discrecioun  
A she wolf hath also a bypens kynde  
The lewdest wolf that she may fynde  
Or leest of reputacioun that wyf she take  
In tyme whan her lust to haue a make  
Al these ensamples speke I by these men  
That been vntreue and nothyng by women  
For men haue euir a licorous appetyte  
On lower thyng to parfourme theire delyte  
Than on theire wyues be they neuir so fayr  
Ne neuir so true ne neuir so debonayre  
Flesshe is so newfangle with myschaunce  
That we ne can in no thyng haue plesaunce  
That so wneeth vnto vertue any while  
Thus phebus whiche that thought no gyle  
Disceyued was for alle his iolite  
For vndre him a nother hadde she  
A man of lytel reputacioun  
Nought worth to phebus in comparisoun  
The more harme is. it happith oft so  
Of whiche there cometh moche harme and wo  
And so besyl whan phebus was absent  
His wyf anoon hath for her lemman sent  
Her lemman certes that is a knauyshe speche  
Forpeue it me and that I you beseeche  
The wyse plato sayth as ye may rede  
The worde must nede accorde with the dede  
If men shorde telle propirly a thyng  
The worde must cosyn be to the workyng



## The manciples tale

I am a boystous man right thus say I  
There is but lytel difference truly  
Betwyte a wyf that is of high degre  
If of her body dishonest she be  
And a pore wenche othez than this  
If it so be they werke bothe a mys  
But that the gentyl is in state aboue  
She shal be clepyd his lady and his loue  
And for that othez is a poure woman  
She shalle be clepyd his wenche or his lemman  
And god it wote myn owne dere brother  
Men lay as so we that one as that othez  
Right so betwyte a tytles tyraunt  
And an outlaue or a theef er aunt  
The same I say there is no difference  
To Alisaundre was tolde this sentence  
That for the tyraunt is of greter myght  
By force of meyne to slee down a right  
And brenne house and hoom and make al playn  
So therfore is he clepyd a capdeyn  
And for the outelaue hath but smalle menye  
And may nat do so grete an harme as he  
Ne bryng a countre to so grete myschief  
Men clepe him an outlaue or a theef  
But for I am a man nat textuele  
I wol nat telle of textes neuir a deel  
I wol go to my tale as I began  
Whan phebus wyf hadde sent for her lemman  
Anoon they wrought alle thei lust volage  
This white crowe that hyng ay in the cage  
Behelde thei ze werke and sayde neuir a worde  
And whan home was come phebus the lorde  
This crowe song cuckow cuckow cuckow

## The manciple's tale

What Byrde quod phebus What syngeſt thou  
Ne were thou nat wont ſo merily to ſyng  
That to my herte it was a reioyſyng  
To here this boyce allas What ſong is this  
By god quod he I ſyng nat amys  
Phebus quod he for alle thy worthynes  
For alle thy beaute and thy gentylnes  
For al thy ſong and alle thy mynſtralcye  
For al thy wapyng bleryd is thy eye  
With one of lytel reputacioun  
Nat worth to the in comparifoun  
The mountenaunce of a gnat ſo moot I thryue  
For on thy bedde thy wyf I ſawe him ſwyue  
What wol ye more the crowe anon him tolde  
By ſadde toknes and by wordes holde  
How that his wyf hadde doon her lechery  
Him to grette ſhame and to grette belong  
And tolde him eft he ſawe it with his eyen  
This phebus gan a waywarde for to pryen  
Him thought his woful hert braſt a two  
His bowe he bent and ſet therein a flo  
And in his ire he hath his wyf ſlayn  
This is the effecte ther is more to ſayn  
For ſorow wherof he brake his mynſtralcye  
Bothe harpe and lute geterne and ſawtry  
And eke he brake his arowes and his bowe  
And after that thus ſpake he to the crowe  
Traytoure quod he With tongue of ſcorpion  
Thou haſt me brought to my confuſioun  
Allas that I was wrought why nere I dede  
O dere wyf o gemme o luſtifiede  
That were to me ſo ſadde and eke to trewe  
Now ſpeſt thou dede With face pale of hewe



## The manicles tale

Ful gyftles that durst I swere y bys  
Drabel honde to do so foule amys  
D trouble wytte o ire rechelesse  
That bnaupsed synnest gyftles  
D wantrust fulle of false suspencion  
Where was thy wytte and thy discrecion  
Deuery man be ware of rechelnes  
Ne trowe no thyng withoute strong wytnes  
Synye nat to sone or thou wytte why  
And be auysed wele and sikerly  
Or ye do any execucion  
Upon poure ire for suspencion  
Alas a thousand foike haue rehyr ire  
Fully fordoon and brought them in the myre  
Alas for sorowe I wol my self slee  
And to the crowe o false theef sayde he  
I wol quyte anoon thy false tale  
Thou song whilom lyke a nyghtyngale  
Now shalt thou false theef thy song forgoon  
Eke thy white fetheres euerichone  
Ne neuir in al thy lyf shalt thou speke  
Thus shal men on a traytoure be wreke  
Thou and thy offspryng euir shal be blake  
Ne neuir swete noyes shal ye make  
But euir crye apenst tempest and rayne  
In token that through the my wyf is slayn  
And to the crowe he stert and that anoon  
And pulled of his white fetheres euerichone  
And made him blake and rest him al his song  
And eke his speche and oute at the dore him stong  
Vnto the deuyll whiche I him be take  
And for this cause be al crows blake  
For dynges by the se ensamples I wol you pray

## The manciples tale

Be ware and take kepe what I say  
Ne tellith neuir no man in pourelyf  
Ho w that a nother man hath dight his wif  
He wol you hate mortally certayn  
Dan Salamon as wyse clerkes sayn  
Techith a man to kepe his tongue wele  
But as I sayde I am nat textuele  
But natheles thus taught me my dame  
My sonne thynke on the crowe a goddes name  
My sone kepe wele thy tongue and kepe thy frende  
A wyched tongue is worse than a feende  
My sone from a feende men may them blesse  
My sone god of his endeles goodnesse  
Walled a tongue with tethe and lyppe eke  
For man shorde him anyse what he speke  
My sone ful oft for to mekyl speche  
Hath many a man be spylt as clerkes teche  
But for lytel speche spoken anysedly  
Is no man shent to speke generally  
My sone thy tongue sholdest thou restrayn  
At al tyme but whan thou doost thy peyne  
To speke of god in honoure and prayer  
The first vertue sone if thou wylt lere  
Is to restreyne and kepe wele thy tongue  
Thus lerne children whan they be yong  
My sone of mekyl spekyng be anysed  
Where lasse spekyng hadde ynough suffised  
Cometh mekyl harme thus was me taughte  
In mekyl speche synne wanteth naught  
Wotest thou wherfore a rabel tongue seruyth  
Right as a swerde forcutteth and forcaruyth  
An arme a twayne my dere sone right so  
A tongue cutteth frendshipp alle a two



## The parsonnes prologue

A ianglelez is to god abhomynable  
Rede Salamon so wyse and honourable  
Rede dauid and his psalmes. rede seneke  
My sone speke nat ne with thy hede thou beke  
Dissimyl as thou were def if that thou here  
The iangeloure spekiþ of parlous matere  
The flemynge sayth lerne if that thou lyst  
That lytel iangelynge causith grete rest  
My sone if thou no wyched worde hast sayd  
The dar nat drede for to be bewrayed  
But he that hath mysseyde I dar wele sayn  
He may by no wey clepe his worde agayn  
Thynge that is sayde is sayde and for the it goth  
Though him repente or him be neuiz soloth  
He is thralle to him to whom he hath sayde  
A tale for whiche he is now euyl appayed  
My sone be ware and be none aboute newe  
Of tydings whether they be false or trewe  
Where so thou come among high or lowe  
Kepe wele thy tounge and thynke on the crosse

Here endith the manciples tale  
And begynneth the parsones prologue

B y that the manciple hadde his tale endyd  
The sounne fro the southe syde is disceded  
So lowe that it was nat to my sight  
Degrees of fyue and twenty of height  
Ten at the cloke it was so as I gesse  
For enleuyn foot a lytel more or lesse  
My shadowe was at that tyme as there  
Of suche feet as my length parted were  
In sex feet equaly of proporcioun

## The parsones prologue

Ther With the mones exaltacioun  
I mene Libra alwey gan ascende  
As were entrynng in the thorpes ende  
For whiche oure hoost as he was wont to gye  
Ay in this caas this ioly company  
Sayde in this wyse lordynges euerichone  
Now lackith vs no tale moze than one  
Fulfylled is my sentence and my decre  
Who wol now telle a tale let se  
Almoost fulfylled is myn ordenaunce  
I pray to god so yeue him right gode chaunce  
That tellith this tale to vs lustily  
Sir preest quod he art thou a bycary  
Or art thou a parson say sothe by thy fey  
Be what thou be breke thou nat oure play  
For euey man saue thou haue tolde his tale  
Vnboke and she we vs what is in thy male  
For truly me thynkith by thy chere  
Thou sholdest knyght bp wele a grete matere  
Tel vs a fable anoon for cockes bones  
This parson him aunswerd alle at onys  
Thou gettyst fable none tolde for me  
For poule that writeth to Tymothe  
Repreuyth them that wayuen sothfastnes  
And techen fables and suche wrechidnes  
Why sholde I saue draffoute of my fyf  
When I may saue whete if that me lyst  
For whiche I say if that ye lyst to here  
Moralite and of vertuous matere  
And than if ye wyl yeue me audience  
I wolde ful fayne at cristes reuerence  
Done you leefful plesaunce as I can  
But trustith wele I am a sotheryn man



## The parsonnes prologue

I can nat geste rum ram ruf by lettre  
And god wote ry me holde I But lytel better  
And therfore if ye lust I wol nat glose  
I wol you telle a lytel tale in prose  
To knytte vp al this feest and make an ende  
And Jesu for his grace wytte me sende  
To shewe you the wey in this bygge  
Of thykke parfyte glorious pylgramage  
That hight ierusalem celestiaile  
And if ye bouche sauf anon I shalle  
Begynne vpon my tale for whiche I pray  
Tel poure aups I can no better say  
But nathelesse this meditacioun  
I put it ay vndre correctioun  
Of clerkes for I am nat textuelle  
I take but the sentence trustith wele  
Therfore I make protestacioun  
That I wol stonde to correctioun  
Vpon this worde we haue assentyd sone  
For as it semyd it was for to doon  
To enden in som vertuouse sentence  
And for to geue him space and audience  
And hadde oure hoost he sholde to him say  
That alle we to telle his tale him pray  
Oure hoost hadde the wordes for vs alle  
Sir preest quod he now fayre moot you befall  
Sayth what ye lyst and we shal gladly here  
And with that worde he sayd in this manere  
Tellith quod he poure meditacioun  
But hastith you the sonne wol adoun  
Beth fructuous and that in lytel space  
And to do wele god sende you his grace  
Here endith the parsones prologue

Sic erunt organa fata — Dobys.



# The Persons tale

And here begynneth his tale.



*Iheremie vi. State super vias et videte et interrogate de viis antiquis. que sit via bona. et ambulate in ea. et inuenietis refrigeriū animabz vestris.*

o Dr swete lord God of  
heue that no man wyl  
perisse but wyl that  
we come al to the kno-  
wlechyng of hym and to the blyssful  
lyf that is pardurable amonesteth  
vs by the prophete Iheremye þ saith  
in this wyse. stondeth vpon the we-  
yes. and see & aye ye of olde pathis.  
that is to saye of olde sentencis whi-  
che is good weye. And walketh in þ  
weye and þ is refresshyng for youre  
soules. Many ben the weyes spiri-  
tuel that leden folke to our lord ihu  
Criste. And to the regne of glorie.

Of whiche weyes: There is a ful no-  
ble weye and wel couenable whiche  
may not faylle to man ne to womā  
that thurgh synne hath misgoon fro  
the ryght weye of Iherusalem celesti-  
all. And this weye is cleped peny-  
tence. Of whiche man shold gladly  
herken and enquire wyth al his her-  
te to wete. what is penytence or pe-  
naunce. And wite whens is clepyd  
penytence. And how many maners  
ben the actions of werchyng of pe-  
nytence. And how many spyes thes-  
re be of penytence. and whiche thyn-  
ges behouen and apperteynen to.

penyence. Saynt ambrose sayth þ  
penyence is the pleyng of the man  
for the gylte that he hath doo.

And nomore to doo ony thyng for  
the whiche hym ought to pleyne.

And som doctor sayth. that penaun-  
ce is the weymentynge of man that  
soroweth for his synne. And pyneth  
hym self for he hath mys don. Peny-  
ence wyth certeyn circumstance is  
Berry repentaunce of man that hol-  
deth hym self in sorowe & other pey-  
ne for his gyltes. And for he shal  
be Berry penitent. He shal first be-  
wailen the synnes that he hath don.  
And stedfastly purpose in his herte  
to haue shrift of mouth. And to doo  
satisfaction and neuer for to do thin-  
ge for whiche hym oughte more to  
bewayle or complayne. and to con-  
tinue in good werkis. Dr ellys his  
repentaunte may not auayle. For  
as saith saint Isodre. He is a Japar  
and a gabbar and not Berry repen-  
taunte that eftsones doth thyng for  
whiche hym oweth to repente ne stin-  
te to doo synne. may not auayle.

But neuertheles men shold take ho-  
pe that at euery tyme that men fal-  
leth be it neuer so ofte that he may a-  
ryse thourgh penyence yf he haue  
grace. But certeynly it is grete  
doubte. for as sayth Saynt Grego-  
re. Synne the ariseth he out of his syn-  
ne. that is charged of euyl vsage.

And therfore repentaunte folke that  
fynite for to synne and for to lete syn-  
ne or synne forlete thym. Holy  
chyrche holdeth hem sykter of her sal-

uacion. And he that synneth and  
Berryly repenteth hym in hys laste.

Holy chyrche hoppyth hys saluacion  
by the grete mercy of our Lord Ihu  
Cryste for his repentaunce.

But take ye the sykter and certayn  
waye. And now sythe I haue de-  
clared yow what thyng is penaunce

Now shul ye vnderstonde that  
there be thre accions. The first is  
that a man be baptised after that he  
hath synneth. Saynt Augustyn  
sayth but he be penitent for hys ol-  
de synful lyf. He may not begynne  
the newe clene lyf. For yf he be  
baptised wythout penyence for his  
olde gylte. He receybeth the marke  
of baptisme. But not the grace ne  
the remyssion of his synnes tyl he ha-  
ue Berry repentaunce.

Another  
defaute is that men done dedely syn-  
ne after they haue receyued baptis-  
me. The thirde defeaute is that men  
falle in venyal synnes after her bap-  
tisme fro day to day. Therof sayth  
saynt Augustyn that penaunce of  
good and humble folke is the peniten-  
ce of euery day. The spyces of penan-  
ce ben thre. That one of them is so-  
lempne. Another is comen and the  
thirde is pryue. That penaunce þ is  
solepne is in two maners. as is to  
be put out of holy chyrche in lenton  
for slaughter of children and suche  
maner thynges. Another is whan a  
man hath synned openly. of whiche  
sinne the fame is openly knowen in  
the contree and thenne holy chyrche  
by Jugement distreyneth hym for to



do open penance. Somme penance  
is that prestes enioyne men comē  
ly in certayn caas as for to god per-  
auenture naked on pylgrymage or  
barefoot. Preuy penance is that uen-  
doon al day for preuy synne of whi-  
che we shryuen vs preuely and recey-  
uen pryuy penance. Now shal  
thou vnderstonde what behoueth &  
is necessarye to euery preuy penytēt  
And these stonde in thre. Contricion  
of herte. Confession of mouth. And  
satisfaction for whiche Johan Lū-  
sostom sayth. Penitence distreñeth  
to accepte benygngly euery peyne þ is  
hym enioyned wth contricion of  
herte and shryfte of mouth wth sa-  
tisfaction and worshipng of alle ma-  
ner humylyte. And this is fructfull  
penance ayenst tho thynges in whi-  
che we wrathen our Lord Ihu cryst  
This is to saue delyte in thynkyng.  
By rechelesnes in spekyng. By wyc-  
ked and synful worshipng. Ayenst  
these wycked gyltes is penance.  
That may be lykened to a tree. The  
rote of this tre is contricion that hy-  
deth hym in the herte of hym that is  
beray repentante ryght as the rote  
of a tree hydeth hym in the erthe. Of  
the rote of contricion spryngeth a  
stalkke that bereth branuchys & leuis  
of confession. And  
the fleshe. Of whiche cryste sayth  
in the gospel. Do ye dygne fruct off  
penitence. For by thys fruct men  
may knowe this tree and not by the  
rote that is hyd in the herte of a man  
Ner by the branchys ne leuys of con-

fession. And therefore our lord Ihu  
Luste sayth thus. By the fruct of  
them ye shal knowe them. Of thys  
rote spryngeth a seed of grace which  
seed is moder of synkernes. And this  
seed is eger & hote. the grace of thys  
seed spryngeth of god through the re-  
menbraunce of the day of dome & of  
the peynes of helle. of this mater.  
Salamon sayth that in the drede of  
god a man forlettith his synne. The  
hete of this seed is the loue of god &  
despyng of the Joye perdurable.  
This hete draweth the herte of man  
to god and doth hym hate his synne  
for there is nothyng that sauoureth  
so sote to a chyld as the mylke of  
his noryce. Ne no thyng is to hym  
more abhomyuable than that myl-  
ke whan it is medlyd wth other  
mylke. Ryght so the synful man þ  
loueth his synne. hit semeth it is to  
hym most swete of ony thyng. But  
fro þ tyme that he loueth sadly our  
lord Ihesu Cryst and despreth the  
lyf pardurable. There is to hym no  
thyng more abhomynabyll. for soth  
the loue of god is the lawe of god.  
for whiche dauid the pphete sayth  
I haue loued thy lawe & hated wyc-  
kednes. he þ loueth god kepeth hys  
lawe and his worde. This the pphe-  
te danyel enspired vpon the byspon  
of Nabogodonosor whan he coun-  
ceyled hym to do penance. Penan-  
ce is of the tree of lyf to them that it  
receyuen. & he that holdeth hym ver-  
ry penytēt is blesyd after the sentence



of salamon In this penytence or contricion man shal vnderstonde four thynges. that is to saye what is contricion. And whiche ben the causes þe meuen a man to contricion. And how he shold be contrite. And what contricion auayleth to the soule.

Then it is thus that contricion is the berry sorow that a man restreyneth in his herte for his synnes wpyth sad purpose to shryue hym and to do penance and neuer more to do synne. And this sorowe shal be in this maner as sayth saint Bernard. It shal be greuous and heuy & wel sharpe and poynaunt in herte. fyrst for a man hath agylted his lord and his creatour. And more sharpe and poynaunt for he hath agylted his fader celestyal. And yet more sharp and poynaunt for he hath wrachyd hym and agylte hym that bought hym wpyth his precyous blood hath delyueryd hym fro the bondes of synne and fro the crueltie of the deuyl and fro the paynes of helle. These causes that meue a man to contricion beyn þi. fyrst a man shal remembre hym of his synnes but loke that remembraunce be to hym no delyte by no weye but shame and sorowe for his gylte for Job sayth synful men don werkes worthy of confusion. & therfor saith Ezechyel. I wyl Remembre me al the peres of my lyf in bytternes of my herte. And god sayth in the appocalips. Remembre yow fro whens that ye besalle for before the

tyme that ye spynned ye were the children of god and synners of the regne of god. But for your synne ye be waven thral and ful menbris of the fend. Hate of aungels. sklaundre of holy chirche. And fode of the fals serpent. perpetuel matier of the fyre of helle. And that more foule and abhominable for ye trespase as oft tyme as doth the hound that tourned agayn to ete his owen spyrng.

And yet fouler for your long contynynge in synne and your synful dysage. for whiche ye be roten in your synnes as a beest in his dung. Suche maner thoughtys maketh a man a shamed for his synnes and no delyte as sayth the prophete Ezechyel. ye shul remembre you of your wepes. and they shal dysplese you. Sothely synnes ben the wayes that lede folk to helle. The second cause that ought to make a man haue desdayn of synne is this as sayth Peter. who so doth synne is thral to synne. And synne punieth a man in grete thraldom. And thefor sayth the prophete ezechyel. I wente sorowful and had dysdayn of my self. Certes wel ought a man haue dysdayn of synne and wpyth drawe hym fro that thraldom and dysloupe. for lo what sayth senekke in this mater he sayth thus.

Though I wpyt that neyther god ne man shol neuer knowe it. yet wolde I haue desdayne for to doo synne. And the same Senekke sayth I am born to gretter thynges than to bee



thralle to my body. more thral may  
uoman ne woman make of his bo  
dy than yee his body to synne. and  
were it the foulest chorle or the fou  
lest woman that lyueth and lest off  
balew. yet he is charged and moost  
foul & most in scrupitude euer fro the  
hyer degre that a man falleth. To  
more is he thral & more to god & to  
the world vile & abhomyable. Do  
good god wel ought a man haue dis  
daygne of synne syth that thourgh h  
there as he was fre now is he made  
bonde And therfore sayth saynt Aus  
tyn. yf thou hast disdaygne of thy ser  
uaunt. yf he agyle or synne haue  
thou thenne no disdaygne that thou  
thy self sholdest do synne. Take re  
warde of thy owen balew h thou  
ne be to foul to thy self ne to thy.

Alas we oughten they that haue dis  
dayn to be seruantes & thral to synne  
Sore to be ashamed of him self. that  
god of his endles goodnes hath sette  
in hygh astate or yee hym stentre  
of body. Beaute. prosperite & bought  
hym fro the deth wyth his heite blod  
that they so vnkynedly agaynst hys  
gentylnes quyen them so vylepussy  
to slaughter of her owen sowls. O  
good god ye wymmen that ben of  
grete beaute remembre yow on the  
prouerbe of Salamon he sayth he  
lykeneth a fair womā that is a fool  
of her body to a ryng of golde that  
is worn in the groyn of a sowe. For  
ryght as a sowe wrotyth in euery or  
dure. so wrotyth she her beaute in sin  
kyng ordure of synne. The thirde

cause that ought to meue a man to  
contricion is drede of the day of do  
me And the horryble peyns of helie  
for as saith saynt Jerome. At euery  
tyme h I remembre of the day of do  
me I quake for whā I ete or drynke  
or do what so I do. euer me semeth  
the trompe sowndeth in myn eres.

Ryseth vp h ben dede and come ye to  
the Iugement. O good god moche  
ought a man to drede suche a Iuge  
ment there as we shal be al. As saith  
saynt Poule. Before the strait Iu  
gement of our Lord Ihesu Cryste.  
where as we shal make a general co  
gregaciō wher as no mā may be ab  
sente. for certes there auayleth none  
essoyne ne non excusaciō & not only  
that our fautes shal be Iuged but  
eke our werkes shal openly be kno  
wen. And h as sayth saint Bernard  
There ne shal no pletynge auayle ne  
no slepyght. we shal yee rekenynge  
of euery ydle worde. Ther shal we  
haue a Iuge that may not be decey  
uyd ne corrupt. and why for certis al  
our thoughtes be discouerd as to  
hym. ne for prayer ne for mede. he  
wyl not be corrupt And also he saith  
The wrath of god wyl not spare no  
wyght for prayer ne for yest. And  
therfore atte day of dome there is no  
ne hope. wherfore as saith saynt An  
celine. ful grete angursshe shal the  
synful folke haue at that tyme whe  
re shal be the sterne & wroth Iuge sit  
tyng aboue & vnder hym the horry  
ble pyt of helle open to dystroie hym  
that wold not be knowe his synnes



## The Persons Tale

Whiche synnes shullen openly be shewyd before god & euery creature. And on the left syde mo deuyllis that the herte may thynke for to harrye & drawe the synful sowles to the pytie of helle. And wythin the hertes of folke shal be the betyng conscience. & wythout forth shal his werkes accuse hym. Thenne shal the wretchyd soule fle to hyde hym. But certes he may not hyde hym he must come forth & shew hym for certes as saith saynt iherome. the erthe shal cast him out of hym and the see also and the ayer also that shal be ful of thunder clappis & lyghtnyng. Now sothly who so wyl remembre hym of thys thynges I gesse that his synnes shal not tourne hym to despyte but to grete sorowe fro drede of the peyn of helle. And therfore sayth Job to god. Suffre lord þ I may a while bewaile & bewepe or I go retornyng to the derke erthe & coueryd wyth derkenes the lond of myserye and of derkenes where as is shadow of deth where as there is none other ordeynance but grysly drede that euer shal laste. Lo here may ye see that Job prayd respyte a whyle to bewepe and wayle his trespass. for sothly one day to respyte is better than alle the tresour of this world. And for as moche as a man may acquyte hym self by fore god by penitence in thys worlde and not by tresour. Therfore sholde he praye to god to geue hym respyte a whyle to bewepyn and bewayple his trespass. for certes all

the sorowe that a man myght make fro the begynnyng of the world nys but a lytyl thyng at the regarde of of the sorow of helle. The cause why that Job clepeth the lond of derkenes vnderstandyth that he clepyth it lond or erth for it is stable & neuer shal fayne derkenes. for he that is in helle hath defaute of lyght naturel. for certes the derke lyght that shal come out of the fyre that euer shal brenne shal torne hem al to peyne þ be in helle. for it sheweth hym al the horryble deuylls that them torment couerd wyth the derkenes of deth þ ben the synnes þ the wretchyd man hath doon. whiche that destourben hym to see the face of god. Ryght as a derke cloude betwene vs and the sonne. Lond of myserye by cause þ there be thre defautes apenst thre thynges that folke of this world haue in this present lyf that is to saye honouris. despytes. & ryches. Apenst honour haue they in hell shame and confucion. for wel ye wote they clepen honour the reuerence that men don to men. But in helle is non honour ne reuerence for certes no more reuerence shal be there to a kynge than a knaue. for whiche god saith by the prophete Iheremye. The folke that me dyspysen shal be in despyte. Honour is eke clepyd a grete lordshipp ther shal no wyght serue other but of harme & turmete. Honour is eke clepyd grete dygnyte & hyghnes. but in helle shal they alle be fortrode wyth deuylls as god sayth. The



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horryble deuyfles shullen go and comyn vpon the hedys of dampnyd folke And this is for as moche that the hyer that they were in present lyf the more they shul be abated & defowled in helle. a peny the riches of this world shal they haue myse of pouerte. And this pouerte shal be in fore thynges in defaute of tresour off whiche Dauid sayth. The riche folke enbrace & couete in al her herte the riches of this world shul slepe in the sleppng of deth. as no thing shul they fynde in there hondes of al her tresour And more ouer the myse of helle shal be in defaute of mete and drynke for god sayth thus by moyses. shal be wasted wyth honger. And the byrdes of helle shal deuoure hem wyth bytter deth. And the galle of the dragon her morcellys. And farther ouer her myse shal be in defaute of clothyng for they shal be naked in body as of clothyng. Saue the fyre in which they biene & other fylthes And naked shal they be in sowle of a maner vertues. whiche that is the clothyng of sowle. where ben thenne the gay robes & the softe shertis and fyn shertis. Lo what saith god of them by the pphete ysaye. In vnder them shal be strawed mothes & her couertouts shal be of wormes of helle. And furtherouer her myse shal be in defaute of frendes for he is not poure that hath good frendys. But there is no frende. for neyther god ne good creature shal be frende

to them. And euery of hem shal hate other wyth dedely hate. The sones & the daughters shal rebelle a peny the fader and moder. And kynrede a peny kynrede and chyden and despyse eche other both day and nyght as god sayth by the prophete mycheas. And the lounyng chyldren in some tyme loued so flesshly eueryche of them wold ete other yf he myght. For how shold they loue to gyder in the peny of helle. whan they hated eche other in the prosperite of this lyf for truste wel her flesshly loue is dedely hate as sayth the prophete Dauid who so lounyng wyckednes he hateth his owen sowle. And who so hateth his owen sowle. Certes he may loue none other wyght in no manere And therfore in helle is no frendshyp but euer the more cursing the more chydng and the more dedely hate is among them. And further ouer they shal haue defautes of alle maner delytes. for why. for delytes ben appetytes of the wittes as syght heeryng. smellng. sauourng. and touchng. but in helle her syght shal be ful of derknes. of smoke and ful of teris. And her heeryng ful of weymentng and of gruntng of teth as sayth Ihu cryste her nosyrtles shal be ful of synkng. And as sayth ysaye the pphete. Her sauourng shalle be ful of bytter galle. And as touchng her body hit shal be couerpd wyth fyre that neuer shal be quenched And wyth woundes



that neuer shal depe as god sayth by  
the mouth of ysaye. & for as moche  
as they shal not wene þ they mo we  
dye for peyn & by deth fle for peyn þ  
may they vnderstonde in the worde  
of Job that sayth that there is þ sha-  
dowe hath a lyknes of the thing of  
which it is shadowed. right so fareth  
the peyne of helle. it is lyke deth for  
the anguyssh horrible. & why. for it  
peyneth them euere as though men  
shold dye anon. But certes they shal  
not depe. for saynt gregore sayth.  
to captyfs shal be deth wpythout deth  
& ende wpythout ende & defaute wpy-  
thout fayling for her deth shal alway  
spue. And her ende shal euere more be  
gryme. & her defaute shal neuer fayle  
And therfore sayth saynt Johan the  
Euangeliste. They shal folow deth  
and they shal not fynde hym and to  
desyre to depe & deth shal fle fro them  
And eke Job sayth that in helle is  
non ordie of rewele. And al be it so þ  
god hath created al in right ordie. &  
nothyng wpythout ordie But al thyn-  
ges be ordeyned and nomgred. yet ne-  
uertheles they þ be dampned be noo-  
thyng in ordie ne holde non ordie.

for the erthe shal bere them no  
fruyt. for as the prophete Dauid  
sayth. God shal destroye the fruyt of  
the erthe from them Ne water shalle  
geue hem no moysture ne the eyer no  
refresshyng. ne the fyre no lyght.  
for as sayth saynt Basyle. The  
Brennyng of the fyre of this worlde  
shal god geue to hem that ben damp-

ned in helle. But the lyght & the clere-  
nes shal be geuen in heuen to his chil-  
dren lyght as the good man geueth  
brede to his chyldren & bones to his  
howndes. And so they shal haue non  
hope to escape. And therfore spekyth  
Job. Atte last there shal honour and  
gristly drede dwellen wpythouten en-  
de honour is alway drede of harme  
that is to come. And this drede shal  
euere dwelle in the hertes of them that  
ben dampned And therfor haue they  
lost al her hope for 3i. causes. first  
for god þ is her Juge shal be wpyth-  
outen mercy to them. ne they may  
not plesse hym ne non of his halowes  
ne may peye no thyng for theyr ran-  
son ne they haue no boys to speke to  
hym. ne they may not fle fro peyne.  
And thefore sayth salamon. the wyc-  
ked man depeth. & whā he is dede he  
shal haue none hope to escape from  
peyne. who so wold wel vnderston-  
de these peynes and bethynke hym  
wel that he hath deservyd the peynes  
for his synnes. Certes he shold haue  
more talent to syghe and wepe than  
for to synge and for to pleye. for as  
sayth Salamon. who that hath scy-  
ence for to knowe peynes that been  
establyshyd and ordeyned for synne  
he wold forsake synne. That science  
sayth saynt Austyn makyth a man  
to wepmenten in his herte. The  
fourth poynt that a man ought to  
make contricion for. is the sorow-  
ful remembraunce of the good that  
he hath lest to doo here in erthe and



eke the good that he hath lost. Sothly the good werkys that he hath lest ether they be the good werkys that he wrought er he fyl in to dedely synne or ellys the good werkys þ he wrought whyle he laye in dedely synne.

Sothely the good that he dyd beforne that he fyl in dedely synne ben all mortefyed astoned & dilled by the est synnyng. The other werkys that he wrought whyle he laye in synne ben vitterly dede as to the lyf perdurable in heuen. Than thylke good werkys that ben mortefyed by est synnyng whiche good werkys he did whyles he was in charyte mo wenener quykken aye wythout bereyng repynt and wythdrawyng the strenges of manys corage and the meynynges in his herte in suche manere as they ne skyppe out by anger ne by pry. And theroof sayth god by the mouth of ezechiel. That yf the right ful man retorne agayn from his right wysnes and to wyrche wyckednes shal he lyuen nay. For al the good werkys that he hath wrought shulle neuer be in remembraunce.

For he shal dye in his synne. And vpon that chapitre sayth saynt Gregory thus that we shul vnderstonde principally that whan we doo dedely synne it is nought. Nether for to drawe in to memoire the good werkys that we haue wrought byforn for certis in the werkynge of dedely synne there is no truste to good werke that we haue doon befor. That

is to saye as to haue therby the lyf perdurable in heuen. But sothely the good werkys that men don whyles they ben i dedely synne for as myght as they were don in dedely synne they may neuer quykken for certes thinges þ neuer hade lyf may neuer quykken. And neuertheless al be it þ they auayle not to haue the lyf perdurable. yet auaylen they to a brydage of the peyn of helle. Or ellys to gete temporel riches. or ellys that god wyl rather enlumpne and lygsten the herte of the synfull man to haue repentaunce. And eke they auayle to a man to doo good werkys that the fende haue the lasse power of his sorwe. And thus the curteys lord Ihesu Cryste wyl that no good werke bee losse. For in somewhat it shal auayle. But for as moche that the good werkys that men don whyles they ben in good lyf ben al mortefyed by synne folowynge. And eke sythe al the good werkys that man doon whyles they be in dedely synne ben vitterly dede as for to haue the lyf perdurable. wel may that man that no good werky doth syng that flessh newe songe.

Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour.

For certes it bereueth a man goodnes and nature and eke the goodnes of grace. for soth the grace of the holy goost fareth as fyre that may not be yde. for spere sayleth anon as it leseth his worchyng.

Than leseth the synful man the goodnes of glorie that only is behoten to good



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men that labouren & werken. wel may he be fory themne that oweth al his lyf to god as long as he lyueth. And eke as longe as he shal lyue. þe no goodnes hath to paye wyth his dette to god to whom he oweth al his lyf. For trust wel he shal peue acoyntys. as sayth saynt Bernard. Of all the goodes that haue be peuen hym in this present lyf. And how he hath despended them not so moche þe there shal perpysshe an hert of his heed ne a moment of an houre that he ne shal peue therof a rekenyng. The fyfte thyng is that ought to meue a man to contricion is remembraunce of the passyon that our lord Ihu cryst suffryd for our synnes. For as sayth saynt Bernard. whyles that I lyue I shal haue remembraunce of the traueyls that our lord Ihu cryst suffryd in prechynge. his werynes in traueylng. his temptacions whan he fasted. his long wakinges whan he prayd. his teris whan he wepte for pyte of good peple. the woo and the shame and the fylthe that men sayden to hym. of the foule spyttynges þe men spytten in his face. of the buffettes þe men gaf hym of the foule mouthis and of the foule reprechys þe men to hym sayden. of the nayles wyth the whiche he was nayled to the crosse And of alle the remenaunt of his passion that he suffryd for mannys synne and nothyng for his gylte. And ye shal vnderstonde that euery maner ordre of ordeynance is torded vp so down. For it is soth that god &

reson and sensualyte and the body of a man ben so ordeyned. that eueryche of thysse four thynges shuld haue lordship ouer þe other as thus god shold haue lordship ouer resō. & resō ouer sensualyte ouer the body of mā but sothly in man semeth al this order of ordenaunce is turned vp so down. And therfore themne for as mykyl as the reson of man wyl not be subget ne obeysaunt to god that is lord by ryght. Therfore leseth it the lordshipp that it sholde haue in sensualyte and eke ouer the body of man. And why for sensualyte rebelleth the ne ayenst reson. And by that wey leseth reson his lordshipp ouer sensualyte and ouer the body.

For ryght as reson is rebel to god

Ryght so is sensualyte rebell to reson and the body also.

And certes thys ordenaunce. And thys rebellyon Dure Lorde Ihesu Cryst aboughte vpon his body well deer. And herkeneth in whiche wyse

For as mykyl themne as reson is rebell to god therfore is man worthy to haue sorowe and to be dede.

This suffryd Our Lord Ihesu for man after he was betrayed of hys discyples and distrened and bounde so that the bloode brast out at euery nayle of hys hondes. As sayth saynt Augustyn. & ferthermore for as mykyl as reson of man wyl not daunte sensualyte whan it may.

Therfore is man worthy to haue shame And this suffred oure Lorde Ihu cryst for man whan they spytte



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in his vylage. And fether ouer the-  
ne for as moche as the captif body  
of man is rebel both to reſon and to  
ſeſualite therfor it is worthy the deſth  
And this ſuſtred our Lord Ihu criſt  
for mā vpon the croſſe. wher as ther  
was no parte of his body fre wyth-  
out grete peyn & bytter paſſion. And  
al this ſuſtred Iheſu criſt that neuer  
forgeteth. To moche am I peyned  
for tho thynges that I neuer deſer-  
uyd and to mykyl defouled for fren-  
ſhyy that man is worthy to haue.  
And therfore may the ſynfull man  
wel ſaye as ſaint Bernard ſayth.  
A corſyd be the bytterneſ. For certes  
after dyuerſe dyſcordauntes of oure  
wyckednes was the paſſion of Ihu  
Cryſt y ordeyned in dyuerſe thyn-  
ges as thus Certes ſynful mannyſ  
ſoule betrayed the deuyl by couetyſe  
of temporel proſperyte and ſcomes  
by diſceyt whan he cheſith fleſſhly de-  
lytes. & is tormented by Impacience  
of aduerſyte & beſpet by ſeruage in  
ſubiectiō of ſynne. & atte laſt he is  
ſlayn ſynally for this diſcordaun-  
ce of ſynful man. was Iheſu Cryſt  
firſt betrayed. And after þ was he  
bound that cam for to vndeynde be  
of ſynne & of the peyne. Thēne was  
he beſcourged þ only ſhold be honou-  
ryd in al thynges & of alle thynges.  
Thenne was his vylage beſpytte þ  
ought to be deſpyred for to be ſeyn of  
al mankynde. In whiche vylage  
aungels deſpyren to loke. and therein  
was viſenſly beſpette Thēne was

he ſcorned þ no thyng had gylt. And  
ſynally thenne was he crucyſped  
and ſleyn. Thenne were accompliſhed  
the wordes of yſaye that ſayth. He  
was wounded for oure myſdedes &  
defouled for our vylonyes. Now  
ſyth þ Ihu Cryſt toke on hym ſelf  
the peyne of al our wyckednes. my-  
kyl ought ſynful man to wepe & to  
bewaylle that for his ſynnes goddis  
ſone of heuen ſhold al this peyne en-  
dure. The vi. thyng that ought  
to meue a man to contryciō is the  
hope of thre thinges that is to ſaye  
forpeuenes of ſynne. and the peſte of  
grace wel for to doo. And the ioye of  
heuen wyth the whiche god ſhal gu-  
erdon man for his good dedes. And  
for as moche as Iheſu Cryſt yeueth  
be the peſtis of his grace and of his  
ſouerayn bounte. Therfore is he cle-  
pyd Iheſus nazarenus rex Judeor  
Iheſus is for to ſay ſauyor or ſalua-  
cion on whom men ſhal hope to ha-  
ue forpeuenes of ſynnys. which that  
is pperly ſaluacion of ſynnes. And  
therfore ſaid the aungel to Joſeph.  
Thou ſhalt clepe his name Iheſus þ  
ſhal ſaue his peple of her ſynnes. &  
herof ſaith ſeynt Peter. Ther is none  
other name vnder heuē þ is yeuen to  
ony man by whiche a man may be  
ſauyd but only Iheſus. nazarenus  
is as moche to ſaye as for flouriſſhing  
in whiche a man ſhal hope that he þ  
yeueth hym remyſſyō of ſynnys ſhal  
alſo yeue hym grace wel for to doo.  
for in the flour is hope of fruyt



in tyme comyng. And in foryeuenes of synne hope of grace wel to doo. I was at dore of thyn herte said ihesus & cleped for to entre. he that openeth to me shal haue foryeuenes of synnes I wyl entre in to him by my grace. and suppe wyth hym by the good werkes that he shal do whiche werkes ben the fode of god. And he shal soupe wyth me by the grete iope that shal be yeuen to hym. Thus shal man hope that for his werkes of penaunce god shal yeue hym hys regne as he behoteth hym in the gospel. Now shal man vnderstonde in what maner shal be his contricion I say hit shal be vniuersal & total. his to save a man shal be veray repentaunt for alle his synnes that he hath don in delyte of his thought. For delyte is perpylous. for ther be two maners of consentynge that one of them is cleped consentynge of affliction. whā a man is meued to do synne a penyte the lawe of god. Al though his reson consente not to do synne in dede. yet seyn som doctours and men that suche delyte that dwelyth longe is full perpylous. al be it neuer so lyte. And also a man shold sorow namely for al þe euer he hath despyed a penyte the lawe of god wyth parfyt conspynnyng to the dede wherfore I say that many men repente hem neuer of suche thoughtes and delytes and neuer shryue hem of it but ony of the dede of grete synnes outward. wherfor I saye that suche wycked delytes and

wicked thoughtes ben subtyl begylars of them that shal be damned. More ouer man ought to sorow for his wycked wordes and for his wycked dedes. for certes repentaunce of a synnguler synne and not repentyng of alle his other synnes. or ellys repentyng hym of alle his other synnes & not of a synnguler synne may not anaplle. For certes god almyghty is al good. And therfore he foryeueth al or ellys right nought. And therfore sayth saynt Austyn. I wote certeynly that god is enemye to euery synnar. And how than he þe obserueth one synne. Shal he haue foryeuenes of the remenaunt of his other synnes. nay. & fetherouer contricion shold be wonder sorowful and anguysshous. & therfore yeueth him god pleyntly his mercy. & therfor whā my soule was anguysshous wythin me I had remembraunce of God þe my prayer myght come. to hym. Forther ouer contricion must be cōtynuel & þe men haue stedfast purpose to shryue hem & for to amende hem of her lyff. Forsothly whyle contricion lasteth man may haue hope of foryeuenes. And of this cometh hate of synne þe destroyet synne both in hym self & eke in other folke at his power. for whiche Dauid saith. ye that louen god. hate wyckednes. for trusted wel to loue god is for to loue that he loueth and hate that he hateth.

The last thyng that a man shal vnderstonde in contricion is thys.



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Wherof auayleth contricion. I saye sonityme that contricion delpuereth a man fro synne. Of whiche daupd sayth I say quod daupd. I purpose firmly to shryue me and thou lorde hast relpyd my synne. And ryght so as contricion auayleth not wythout sayd purpose of shryfte and satisfaccion. ryght soo confessyon ne satisfaction auayle not wythout contricion. For moche contricion destro. yeth the pryson of helle And makith weck and feble the strenth of the de. uyl. And restoreth the yeste of the holy ghoost and of alle vertues and Interdenyeth the soule of synne and delpuereth the soule fro payne of hell and fro the company of the deuyl.

And fro seruage of synne. And resto. ryth to alle goodnes spiritual in to the companie and comunyon of holy chyrche. And fether ouer hit makyth hym that whylome sone of pre. to be the sone of grace. And alle these thynges he putteth to holy writ And therfore he that wyl sette his en. tente to thysse thynges he were ful wi. se. For thenne he shold not in al his lyf haue corage to synne But thenne his body and alle hys herte. he shold confourme to the scrupse of Ihu cuf. te. And therfore do hym homage for certes our swete Lord Ihesu Cryste hath sparyd vs so benygny in oure folpes that yf he ne had pite on man nys soule. A sory songe myght we alle synge.

*Explicit prima pars penitencie.*

*Incipit secunda pars.*

He second parte of penyte. re is confessyon and that is synge of contricion.

Now shal ye vnderstonde what is confessyon. and whether it ought ne. des to be or none. and whiche thyn. ges ben couenable to berry confess. on. First shalt thou vnderstonde h. confessyon is berry shewyng of syn. ne to the preeft. this is to saye berry. For he must confesse hym of alle the condicions that be longynge to hys synne as ferforth as he can. al must be sayd and nothyng excused ne hid ne forwrappid and not auauite him of hys good werkys. And fethero. uer it is necessarye to vnderstonde whens that synnes spryngen.

And how they encrecen. and ther ben spryngyng of synnes as sayth saint Poule in this wyse. That right as by a mā synne entryd first in to this world. And thurgh that synne deyde Ryght so deeth entryd in to alle men that synneden. And this man was adam by whom h synne entrid in to this world whan he brake the com. maundement of god. & therfor he that first was so myghty h he sholde not deyed. becam suche one that he must nedes deye whether he wold or noo & al his pgenye h is in this world that in h maner synne depen. loke h in the state of inorece whā adā & eue were naked in paradise & no sham had of her nakednes. how h h serpet h was most wply of al other bestys h god had made said to the womā qnaded god to you ye shold not ete of euery



tre in paradysse. The woman answered of the fruyt sayd she of the trees in paradysse we feden vs. But sothly of the fruyt of the tre that is in the myddel of paradysse. God forbade vs for to eten ne to touche it lest perauenture we shal dye. The serpent sayde to the woman: nay. nay. ye shal not dye of deth. For soth god wote that what day that ye ete thereof your eyen shalle open and ye shal be as goddes knowynge good and harm. The woman sawe that the tree was good to fedynge and sayre to the eye and delectable to the syght. She took of the fruyt of the tre and ete of it. And gaf of it to her husbande. And he ete. And anon the eyen of them both openyd. And whan they knewe that they were naked. They sowyd of a figg tree leuys in maner of brechis to hyden her membris.

Here may ye see that dedely synne hath first subiectyon of the fende. As shewyth here by the adder. And after ward the delyte of the flesshe as shewyth here by Eue. And after by consentynge of reson as shewyth by Adam. For trust wel though so were the fende one ctemptyd that is to saye the flesshe And fruyt of satysfaction had delyte in beaute of the fruyt defendyd. yet certes tyl that reson that is to saye. Adam consentyd to the etynge of the fruyt. He stode hygh in the state of Innocence. Of that Adam to be we that synne orygynal. For of hym flesschly descended Ben we al and engendryd of vile &

corrupt mater. and whan the soule is put in our body right anon is contracted orygynal synne. & þ was only peyne of concupyscence. whiche is after ward both peyne and synne. And therefore be we al born sonnes of wrath and of dampnatyon perdurable yf ne were baptysme that we recyue whiche benymeth vs the culpe. But forsoth the peynes dwelle wyth vs as the temptation. whiche peyn hyght concupiscence. And this concupiscence whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man. Hit maketh hym coueyte couetyse of flesshe and flesschly synne by syght of his eyen as to the erthely thynges.

And eke couetyse of hyghnes by pryde of herte. Now as for to speke of the first couetyse that is concupyscence after the lawe of our membris þ were lausfully made and by ryghtful Iugement of god. I saye for as moche as a man is not obeyssaunt to god that is his lord. Therefore is his herte to hym dysobeyssaunt. thurgh concupiscence. Hit is Impossyble but he be tempted som tyme and noyed in his flesshe to synne. And this thyng may not sayle as longe as he lyueth. Hit may wel weye feble and sayle by vertu of baptysme.

And by the grace of god thurgh penytence. But fully shal it neuer quenche. That he ne shal somtyme be meuryd in hym self but yf he were all refreyned by sykenes or by malysce of forserpe



## The Persons Tale

or colde drynkes. For what sayth  
saynt Paule. The flesshe coueteth a-  
penst the spirite. ⁊ the spirite apenst  
the flesshe they ben so contrarpe. And  
so stryuen that man may not doo al  
leway as he wolde. The same saynt  
Paule after his grete penaunce in  
water and in sonde by nyght and by  
day by grete payr and in grete pain  
in sonde in grete famyn and thurst in  
colde and ones stoned almost to deeth

yet sayd he alas I catyf man.  
who shal delyuer me fro the pryson  
of my catyf body. And saynt Ihe-  
rome sayd. whan he long tyme hade  
dwellid in desert wher as he had no  
cōpani but bestes wher as he had no  
mete but herbis ⁊ water to his drink  
ne no bed but the naked erthe. For  
whiche his flesshe was black as an  
ethyope for hete ⁊ destroyed for colde  
yet sayd he the brennyng of lecherie  
boppled in alle his body. wherfor I  
wote wel spikertly that they be decep-  
ued that saye that they be not temp-  
ted in her sede spryngyng. As well  
may a choul be sau'd as the lord the  
same dethe þ the choule takyth the  
lorde takyth. wherfore I re-  
de doo ryght so by thy choule.

As thou woldest they lord dyd wyth  
the yf thou were in his pryght.

Euery synful man is choule to syn-  
ne I rede she certes thou lord þ thou  
rewele the in suche wyse that the chor-  
les rather loue the thenne hate the.

I wote wel there is degre aboue de-  
gre as reson is and skylle is þ men  
doo her deuopet there as it due. But

certes extorions ⁊ despyte of poure  
vnderlynges is dampnable. And  
furthemor vnderstonde well that  
cōquetours or tirantis maken wel  
ofte thrallys of them that ben borne  
of as ryall blood as they that them  
conquertyn.

This name of  
thraldom was neuer known eerst  
tyl that Noe sayd. His sone canaan  
shold be thral to his brethern for his  
synne. what saye we thenne of them  
that pylle and do extorions to holy  
chirche.

Certes the swerde that  
men peuen first to a knyght whan  
he is newe dubbid signefyth that he  
shold defende holy chyrche and not  
robb: them.

And who  
soo doth is a traytour to Cryste as  
sayth Saynt Austyn. Who ben  
the deuellys wolurys that strangelyn  
the sheep of Ihesu Cryste and doon  
worse than wolurys.

For soth whan the wolf hath ful his  
wombe he stenteth to strangle sheep.

But sothly the pylours and dis-  
troyers of goodes of holy chyrche  
do not so. For theye stynte neuer  
to pylle. Now haue I said syn  
soo is that synne was fyrst cause of  
thraldom and subiection.

But certes syth the tyme of grace  
cam. God ordeyned that som folke  
shold be made more in hygh degre.  
⁊ som falk more lowe estate and hy-  
gher. And that eueriche shold be  
seruyd in hye estate and his degre.  
And therfor in som contres there as  
they ben thrallys. when they haue  
torned hem to the feith they make her



## The Persons tale

thrallys fre out of thraldom. And therfor certes the lord owyth to hys man. that the man oweth to the lord. The pope clep yth hym self seruaunt of seruauntes of god. But for as moche as the state of holy chyrche myght not be kept in reste ne in pees in erthe. But yf god had ordeyned hys men haue hyer degree. And som men lower. Therefore was soue raynte ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and defende her vnderlynges or her subiectes in reson as fer forth as it lyeth in her power. And not to destroe hem ne confounde. wherfor I saye thylk lordes ben woluyss that deuouren the possessyons or the catel of other folke wrongfully wythout mercy or mesure. They shul be releyd by the same mesure that they haue mesured to poure folk for the mercy of Ihesu Cryste but they it amende. Now shul ye vnderstonde in what maner synne wepeth and encreaseth in man. The first thyng is hynorysshing of syn of which I spak byfore that is concupcense. And after that cometh subiestyon of the deuyl that is to saye the deuyllys bewyle. wyth which he bloweth in man the fyre of concupcense. And after that a man be thynkelsh hym whether he wold doo or no that thyng to whiche he is tempted And than yf that a man wythstonde and weyue the first tpyng of his flesshe and of the fende. than it is no synne. And yf so be he do not than feleth he anon

a flame of delyte. And than it is good to bewaar to kepe hym well or ellys he wyl falle anon in to consentyng of synne. And than wyl he do it yf he may haue tyme and space. And of this mater sayth Moyses by the deuyl in this maner. The fende sayth I wyl chache and pursewe the man by wyckyd subgestyon. and I wyl honte hym by meuyng or steryng of synne. And I wyl departe my pryse or my pray by delyberaciō And my lyst shal be accomplysshed in delyte. I wyl drawe my swerde in consentyng. for certes right as a swerde departeth one in two pecys. Right so consentyng departeth god from man. And thenne wyl I flee hym wyth my honde in deth off synne. Thus sayth the fende. for certes thenne is a man al dede in soule. And thus is synne complysshed by temptacion. by delyte and by consentyng. And thenne synne is cleped a meruaylle. for soth synne is in two maners. either it is venyal or dedly synne. Sothly whan a man loueth ony creature more than Ihesu Cryste our creatour thenne it is dedly synne. And venyal synne yf a man loue Ihesu cryst lesse than hym ought. forsothe the dede of this venyal synne is ful perylous for it amynusith the loue that men shold haue to good more. And therfor yf a man charge more hym self wyth many suche venyal synnes. certis but if so be that he discharge of them by shrift.



they may well lyghlylly amenuse in hym al the loue that he hath to Ihesu cryste. And in this wyse skyppeyth Venyal synne in to the dedely synne for certes the more that a man chargeth his soule wyth Venyal synnes the more is he inclyned to dedely synne. & therfore leet vs not be nedigent in dischargyng vs of Venyal synne. For the prouerbe sayth many smale maketh a grete. And herkenie this ensauple A grete wawe of the see cometh somtyme wyth a grete a dysolence that it drenchyth the shyp. And the same harme doo somtyme the smale dropes of water. That entreth thurgh a lytyl creys in the thurrokk and in the botom of the shyp yf me be so neglygent þ they dyscharge hem not by tyme. And therfore al though there be difference betwene thysse two causes of drenchyng yet algates the shyp is dreynt. ryght so farrithe it somtyme of dedely synne & of anopous Venyal synnes whā they muldeple in man so gretely that the worldy thynges þ he loueth thurgh whiche he synneth Venyal is as grete in his herte as the loue of god or more. And therfore the loue of euery thyng that is not beset ne don pryncipally for goddes sake. Al though a man loueth lasse than god. yet is it Venyal synne. And dedely synne is whā the loue of ony thyng weyeth in the herte of man as moche as the loue of god or more. Dedely synne as sayth saynt Augustyn is whan a

man torneth his herte from god whiche that is berey souerayn bounte þ may not be chaunged. And peuetth his herte to a thyng that may chaunge and flytte. And certes that is euery thyng saue god of heuen. Forsoth yf that a man peue his loue whiche he oweth to god wyth al his herte vnto a creature certes so moche of loue as he peuetth to suche a creature. soo moche bereuetth he fro god. And therfore doth he synne. for he that is dettour to god ne peldeth not alle his dette to god that is to saye alle the loue of his herte. Now syth a man vnderstondeth generally whiche is Venyal synne Than is it couenable to tellespecyally of synnes whiche that many a man perauenture demeth he in not synnyng and shryueth them not of the same synnes. And yet neuertheles they be synnes. And sothly as clerkes wyten this is to say þ euery tyme that a man eteth & dryncketh more than suffyeth to sustenance of his body certeyn he doth synne. Like whan he harkeneth not the compleynt of the poure men. Like whan he speketh more than it nedeth it is synne Like whan he is in helthe of body & wyl not faste whan other men faste wythout cause resonable. Like whan he slepeth more than nedeth. or whan he cometh by þ enchosyn to late to churche or to other werkis of charyte. Like whan he vsith his wyf wythouten desyre souerayn of engendryng to thonour off



god or for thetēt to yelde his wyf the  
 dette of his body. Eke whan he wyl  
 not bysite the spke or the prysoners  
 whan he may. Eke yf he loue wyff  
 or childe or any other worldly thyng  
 more than resor requireth. Eke yf he  
 flatere or blaundyse more than hym  
 ought for any necessity. Eke yf he a  
 menuse or wythdrawe the almes of  
 the poure. Eke yf he apatayle hys  
 mete more delyciously than nede is  
 or ete it to hastily by sychorousnes.  
 Eke yf he talke bantees in the chir  
 che or at goddes sermyse or that he be  
 a talker of ydle wordes of foly or  
 of byloure. For he shal yeue acoun  
 tes of it at the day of dome. Eke  
 whan he behoteth or assureth to doo  
 thynges that he may not perfoyme.  
 Eke whan he lyghenes of folpe mis  
 seyeth or scornyth his neyghbour.  
 Eke whan he hath any wycked sus  
 picion of thyng there be woot of hit  
 no sothfastnes. These thynges and  
 moo wythouten nombre be synnes  
 as sayth saynt Austyn. Now shal  
 we vnderstonde that al be it soo that  
 none erthly man may eschewe al ve  
 nyal synnes. yet may he refrene hym  
 by the brennyng loue that he hath to  
 our lord Ihesu cryste. And by pra  
 yers and confession and other goode  
 werkis so that it shal but lytyl gre  
 ue. For as sayth saynt Augustyn  
 yf a man loue god in suche maner  
 al that euer he doth is in the loue off  
 god or for the loue of god. so ke how  
 mykyl that a drope of water that

fallyth in a furnes ful of fyre ar  
 nopeth or greueth so mykyl anoy  
 eth a venyal synne vnto a man that  
 is perspyght in the loue of Ihu crist  
 Men may also refreyne venyalie  
 synne by the receyving of the preci  
 ous body of Ihesu Cryste. by recey  
 uynge eke of holy water. by almes  
 dede. by general confessyon of confy  
 teor at masse and at pryme and com  
 plyne. And by blyssynge of bysshops  
 pps and of preestes. And by other  
 good werkys.

De septem peccatis mortalibus.  
 Incipit de superbia.

Now it is behouely thyng  
 to tellyn whiche ben dedely  
 synnes. that is to saye cap  
 tif of synnes. Alle they renne in to co  
 lis but in dyuerse maner. Now be  
 the cleped captifs for as moche as  
 they be chyf and spryngynge of alle  
 other synnes. Of the rote of thys. vii  
 synnis is pryde the general rote of  
 al harmys for of this rote spryngyn  
 certen braunchis. as Ire. enuye. ac  
 idye. or slouth. auarice. or couetyse  
 to comyn vnderfondyng. glotonye  
 and lecherie. And eueryche of thys  
 synnes hath his braunches and hys  
 twygges as shalle be declared in her  
 chapytres folowynge. and though so  
 be that man knowyth not vnterly  
 the nombre of the twygges and off  
 the harmys that comen of pryde. yet  
 wyl I shewe a partye of them as ye



shal vnderstonde. ther is inobedience  
 auaintynge. ypocryse despyte. arro-  
 gance. Imprudence: smellynge of  
 herte. Insolence. Elacyon. pertyna-  
 cye. Deph glorie. And other twyggis  
 that I can not declare. Inobedy-  
 ent is he that dysobeyeth for despyte  
 to the commaundement of god and  
 to his souerayns & to his gostly fa-  
 der. Auaintour is he that auainteth  
 hym of the harme or of the bounte þ  
 he hath don. Ypocryse is he that shy-  
 deth to shewe hym suche as he is.  
 And shewed hym to the peple to seme  
 suche as he is not. Dyspytous is he  
 that hath disdain of his neyghbour  
 that is to saye of his euen crysten &  
 hath dyspyte to doo that hym ought  
 to do. Arrogant is he that thinketh  
 that he hath that bounte in hym that  
 he hath not. or weneth that he sholde  
 haue it by his deserte. or ellys that he  
 demeth that he be that he is not. Im-  
 prudent is he that for his pryde hath  
 no shame for his synne. Swellyn-  
 ge of herte is whan a man reioysseth  
 hym of harm that he hath don. Inso-  
 lent is he that dyspyseth in his Juge-  
 ment alle other folke as to the regar-  
 of his walewe and of his conynge &  
 of his spekyng and of his berynge.  
 Elate is he whan he may nether suf-  
 fre to haue mayster ne folowe. Im-  
 patient is he that wyl not be taught  
 ne vndernome of his byces and by  
 shryft warrpþ apenst trowth wetyn-  
 gly and defendeth his foly. Contu-  
 may is he þ thugh his Indignaciõ  
 is apenst euery auctoryte or power

of them that ben his souerayns Pres-  
 sumpcion is whan a man taketh  
 an empyse that hym ought not to  
 doo. or ellys he may it not doo. And  
 that is callyd surquydry. Irreueren-  
 ce is whan a man doth not honoure  
 there as hym ought to doo and way-  
 teth to be reuerenced. Pertynacy is  
 whan a man defendeth his foly and  
 trusteth to mykyl to his owen witte

Deph glorie is for to haue pompe  
 and delpte in temporel hygnes and  
 gloryffe hym in worldy estates. Jan-  
 gelyng is whan a man spekyth to  
 mykyl to fow folke & clappeth as  
 a mylle and taketh no kepe what  
 he sayth. And there is yet a pryncy-  
 spye of pryde that wayteth first to be  
 salewed or he salewe. all be he lesse  
 worthy than that other it perauetur  
 and eke he wayteth to sytte or to go  
 aboue hym in the weye or kyssse pay-  
 or be sensyd or goo to offryng before  
 his neyghbour & suche a pryncy despy-  
 re to be magnifyed & honoured be-  
 fow the peple. Now ben ther two  
 maners of pryde that one of them is  
 wythin the herte of a man. And that  
 other is without. Of whiche forsaide  
 thinges and moo than I haue sayde  
 apperteynen to the pryde þ is wythin  
 the herte of man. And there be also  
 other spyces of pryde þ be withouten  
 But neuertheles one of thysse spyces  
 of pryde is spgne of that other Right  
 as the gay leffel of tauernes is signe  
 of the wyne that is in the seler. And  
 this is in many thynges as in speche  
 in contenance in outrageousnes.



of aray of clothyng Crist wolde not so sone haue noted & spoken of the clotnyng of that riche man in the gospel but yf it had be spynne. For as sayth saynt Gregore. Precyous clothyng is culpable for the derthe of it and for his strangenes. for his dysgysnynges and for the superfluyte or for the Inordynate scantnes. And to the fyrst synne that is in superfluyte of clothyng. whiche that maketh it so dere to harm of the peple that on ly the coste of the enbrowdyng. The dysgysnyng endentyng. or barrayng. oundnyng. palnyng and semblable wise of clothyng in Banpte. There is also so cossew farrayng in gownes. And also mykyl pounsyng of chesell to make hoolys so mykyl daggyng of shenis wyth the superfluyte in lengthe of the forsaide gownys trapling in the dung and in the myre on hors and eke on foot as wel of man as of woman. that al that treplyng is verily as in effect wasted. consumed tredbare and roten wyth dung rather than it is geuen to the poure. to grete damage of the forsaide poure folke and that in sondry wyse. thys is to sayn the more that cloth is wasted the more must it coste for the scarfenes. And furtherouer yf they wolde yeeue suche pounsyd and daggyd clothis to the poure folke. It is not conuenient to were for her estate ne sufficient to her necessity. On that other syde for to speke of the dishordynat scantnes of clotnyng as ben thysse ruttid stoppis or hāselines þ through

her shortnes couer not the shamefull membres of a man to wycked entente. Alas somune of them shewe in the shap and the boas of the honnyble swollen membrys that semen like to the maladye of hyrma in the wrappyng of her hosyn and eke the buttocks of hem besynd that faren as is were the hynderparte as a sheape in the ful of the mone. And more ouer the wretchyd swellnyng membrys that they shewe in dysgysnyng in departnyng of her hosyn whit and rede semeth that half the preuy membrys weren sleyn. And so by þ they departe their hosen in other colours as is whyte and black or whyt

Adn blewre or blacke and reed and so forth. Than semeth it as by Barpaunce of calour that half the parte of his preuy membrys ben corrupt by the fyre of saynt Antoupe. or by Lanker. or by other suche mischauntes. yet of the hynderparte off her buttocks it is wel honnyble for to see for certes in that partpe of her body there as they purgen her styngyng ordure. that full party shewe they proudly to the people in despyte of honeste. whiche honeste that Ihesu Crist and his frendes obserued to shewe in his lyf. Now as to outerageous aray of woman. god woote though the dysage of hem seme ful chaste & debonaire. yet notosyn they in theyr arape of a tyre. lychorousnes and pryde. I saue pot þ honeste in clotnyng of man and woman is vncouenable



## The Persons tale

But certes the superfluyte or dysfordinat skarcete of cloting is reprobable Also the synne of ornament or in apparell as in thynges that apperteyne to rydng. as in many delycat horses that be holden for delyte by cause they be so fayr fat and costlewe. and also many vicious knaue mayntened by cause of them. And in curpous harnes as in saddles. riopers. peytrellys. and brydles couerdyd wyth precious clouth and riche barres and plates of golde and syluer. for whiche god sayth by zakarye the prophete. I wyl consoide the ryders on suche horsis These folke taken lityl regarde of rydng of goddes sone and his harnes whan he rood vpon an asse and had none othter harnes but the clothis of poure disciples. Ne we rede not that he rode euer on ony ather beste. I speke thus that of superfluyte. not for the honeste whan reison it requyret. And setther ouer certes pryde is grete ly notyfyed in holdyng of grete meyne whā they be of lytyl prouffyt. And name ly whā the meyne is felonous and domageous to the peple by hardynes of her lordship or by weye of ofspye for certes suche lordys sellen her lordshippes to the deuyll of helle. whā they susteyne the wyckednes of her meyne. or ellys whā these folke offlowe degre as they that holde hostelryes susteyn theft by their hostylers that is in many maners of discretes suche maner of folke ben the flyes þ

folowen the hony. Or ellys the houses that folowen the cateryn whiche forsayd folke stranglen spyrituelly her lordship. for whiche dauid saith wyckednes moot come on the lordshippis. And god gyue that they moos we descende down in to helle. for in her houses is iniquyte and shrewdnes and not god of heuen. And certes yf thou doo no mendemēt right as god yaf his blyssyng to laban by cause of Jacob and to Pharaos for the seruyce of Ioseph. Right so wyl god geue his matyson to suche lordes that susteyne the wyckednes of her seruauntes. But the comyn pryde of the table apperpyth eke fur ote. for certes riche men be clpyd to festys & poure folk be put away and rebuked. And there is eycesse of dyuerse metes and drynkes and namely off curpous maner of bakmetis and of semblable wast so that it is abusyon for to thynke. And eke in grete preciousnes of vessel and curiosite of mynystralrye by the whiche a man is styred more to the delytes of luxurte. yf so be that he sette his herte the lesse vpon our lord Ihesu Cryst certes it is a synne. And certes the delycate metys & the delyte myght be soo grete in the caas þ men myght the lyghthlyer falle on hem in to dedely synne. The spytes þ souden of pryde Sothly is whā they souden off malyce ymagyned and awpsed and forny cast or ellys of vsage. Ben dedely synnes it is no doubte. & whā they



fourden by freelte bnaupsed sodeyn  
ly. ⁊ sodeynly wythdrawe agayn. al  
be they greuous synnes. I gess ⁊ sup  
pose they be not dedely. Now myght  
men aye wherof that pryde souldeth  
⁊ spryngeth. And I say þ̄ somtyme  
it spryngeth of goodes of nature. ⁊  
somtyme of the goodes of fortune ⁊  
sōtyme of the goodes of grace. certes  
the goodes of nature stōden in the go  
des of body or of soule. certes the go  
des of the body. be hele of body strēth  
despuernes. beaute. gentrye. ⁊ fraun  
chyse. The goodes of nature of the  
soule ben good witte sharpe vnder  
stondyng. subtil engenye. virtu na  
turel good memorye. Goodes of for  
tune ben ryches. hygh degrees of lord  
shippis ⁊ preysynges of the people.  
Goodnes of grace been scyence. po  
wer to suffre spiritual trauayle. be  
dygnytes. vertuous contemplation  
wythstondyng of temptation ⁊ sem  
blable thynges. Of whiche forsayde  
goodes certes it is a grete folpe a mā  
to pryden hym in ony of them alle:  
Now as for to speke of goodes off  
nature god wote that som tyme we  
haue hem in nature as moche to our  
domage as to our prouffyt. As for  
to speke of hele of body certes it pas  
syth ful lyghtly. And eke it is ful of  
te thenchoson of the sekenes of the  
soule for god woot the flesshe is a ful  
grete enemye to the soule. And ther  
for the more that a body is hool. the  
more be we in payl to falle. Eke  
for to pryde hym in his strengthe off  
body it is a grete folpe. For certes

the flesshe conceyeth apenst the spyrite  
And euer the more strōger the flesshe  
is. the foryer may the soule be. And  
ouer al this strength of the body ⁊  
worldly hardynes causeth ful ofte  
many men to peryll and mynchau  
ce. Eke for to pryde hym of his gen  
trye. it is ful grete folpe. For ofte ty  
me the gentrye of the body begyn  
neth of the gentrye of the soule. And  
eke we be alle of one fader and of  
one moder. And al we ben of one na  
ture rotyng and corrupt both riche ⁊  
poure. For soth a maner gentrye is  
for to pryde þ̄ appareylleth mannes  
corage wyth vertues or moralptees.  
and makyth hym a crysten chyld.  
For trusteth wel that what mā that  
synne ouer maystryde is very choill  
to spume. Now ben there thre gene  
ral thynges of gentylnes as esche  
wyng of vyces or rybauldrye. And  
seruage of synne in worde ⁊ werke  
in contenauce ⁊ vsyng vertu as cur  
tesye clenness ⁊ to be lyberalle that  
is to saye large by mesure. For that  
that passyth mesure is folpe and syn  
ne Another is that he remembre hym  
of the bounte that he of other folke  
hath recepyd. Another is to benig  
ne ouer his subgette. wherfore as  
sayth Senekke. There is nothyng  
more couenable to man of hygh es  
tate than debonaryte. ⁊ these flesshe þ̄  
men clepen bees. whan they make  
her kynge. they chesen one that hath  
non prycke wherwyth he may syn  
ge. Another is a man to haue a no  
ble herte and a dyslygent tatteyn to



hye Vertuous thynges. Certes also who that pryde in the goodes off fortune he is ful lyke a greet sole.

For somtyme a man is a full grete man by the morowe that is a wretche or a captif or it be nyght. & somtyme despytes oe man ben cause of greuous maladye thorough whiche he dyeth Certes the commendacyon of the peple is somtyme ful fals & full brotyl for to trust This day they preysse. to morowe they blame. god woot Like desyre to haue commendacion of the peple hath causyth deth to many a man. Now certes a man to pryde hym in the goodes of grace is eke an outrageous folye for the yefes of grace that shold haue tourned hym to goodnis & to medecyne tournyth to venym and to confusion. as sayth saynt gregore. Now syth that so is that ye haue vnderstonde what is pryde and whiche be the spryes of it And how mennys pryde sourdeth and spryngyth Now shal ye vnderstonde which is the remedye against pryde. And that is humylyte or mekenes That is a vertu thrugh which man hath very knowleche of hym self and holdeth of hym self no deyn te ne no pryce as in regarde of his desertes consyderyng euer his freckle. Now ben there thre maners of humylyte. as humylyte in herte. and another in the mouth. And the thyrde in werkyng. The humylyte in herte is in foure maners that is whan a man holdeth hym self as nought worth

byfore god of heuen. Another is whan he despyseth non other man.

The thirde is. that he reekyth not though men hold hym nought The fourth is whan he is not sorpy of his humylyacion. Also the humylyacion of mouth is in foure thynges In attēperat speche & whā he knoweth with his owen mouth þ he is suche as he thinke th þ he is in his herte. Another whan he preysseth the debonayrte of another man And also nothing therof amensith. Humylyte eke in werkyng is in four maners The first is whan he put men before hym. The second is to chese the lowest place. The thyrde is gladly to assente to good counceyl. The fourth is gladly to stonde in obedyence of his souerayn or of hym that is hygher in degree. Certes that is a grete wercke off humylyte.

Sequitur de Inuidia

After pryde wyl I speke off  
a the foule synne of enuye.

whych that is as by the worde of the phylosophre sorowe off other mennys proussyt. And after the worde of saynt Augustyn it is sorowe of other mennys wele and Joye of other mennys harm. This foule synne is platly ayenst the holy ghoost. Al be it so that euery synne is ayenst the holy ghoost. yet for as moche as bounte apperteyneth to the holy ghooste properly. And enuye cometh properly of malpce Therefore it is properly ayenst the



Bounte of the hooky ghooft.

Now hath malice two spyces that is to save hardynes of herte and wyckednes. or ellys the flesshe of man is so blynde þ he cōsideryth not þ he is in synne. whiche is the hardynes off the deuyll. That other spyce of enuie is whan a man warrpyth ayenst trouth whan that he woote that it is trouth. And also whan he warrpyth the grace that god hath geue to his neyghbour. And al this is enuie Certes than is enuie the worst synne that is. for sothly al other synnes he somtyme ayenst one spyrual vertue but certes enuy is ayenst all maner vertues and al goodnes for it is sorow of al bounte of his neyghbours.

And in this maner it is diuerse from al synnes for vnnethe is there ony synne that it ne hath somme despyte in hym saue only enuie that euer hath in hym self anguysshe and sorowe.

The spyces of enuie ben thysse There is first sorowe of other mennys goodnes. And of her prosperyte ought to be kyndly mater off ioye Thene is enuie a synne ayenst kynde The seconde spyce of enuie is Ioye of other mennys harme.

Of this seconde spyce cometh bacbytynge or detraction that hath two spyces as thus Som men preysse her neyghbour by wycked entente. for he maketh alway a wycked knotte at the last ende alway he maketh a but that is signe of more blame than worth is al the preysynge. The second spyce is that a man be good and do and save a thyng to good entente.

The bacbyter wyl torne al the goodnes by soo down to his shrewde entente. The thirde is to amenuise the bounte of his neyghbour. The fourthe spyce of bacbytynge is this that if men speke godnes of a man the bacbyter wyl save. perfar yet is suche a man better than he in dyspreysynge of hym that men prayse. The fyfthe is to consente gladly to herkne the harme that men speken of other folke. This synne is ful grete and by encrepyth after the wycked entente of the bacbyter. After bacbytynge comyth grutchynge or murmuraunce And somtyme it spryngeth of Impacience ayenst god and somtyme ayenst man. Ayenst god is whan a man grutchyth agaynst the peyne of helle or ayenst pouerte or losse of catel or ayenst rayn or tempest. or ellys grutcheth that shrewdes haue prosperyte. or ellys that gode men haue aduersyte.

And alle thysse thynges shold men suffre patiently. for they comen by the rightful Iugement and ordynauce of god Somme tyme cometh grutchynge of auarice as Judas grutchyd ayenst Magdalene whan she anonnted the hede of our lord Ihesu Cryst wyth her precyous oynement This maner of mutmur is suche as whan men grutchen of goodnes. off that men hem self doon. or that other folke doon of her owen catel:

Somtyme cometh mutmur of pryde as whan Symon the Pharysee grutchyd ayenst Magdalene whan she approchyd to Ihesu Cryste.



## The Persons Tale

And wept at hys feet for her synnes

And somtyme it sourdeth of enuie whan man dyscouereth a manys harm that was pryue or beryth hym on honde thyng that is fals.

Murmur is eke ofte amonge seruantes whan her souerayns bydden hem doo leful thynges.

And for as moche as they dar not openly wythsaye the commaundement of her mayster. yet wyl they saye harme and grutch and murmure pryuely for very despyte. whycher wordes men clepe the deuyls Patir noster. Though so be the deuyl had neuer Patir noster.

But that folke yee suche a name. somtyme it comyth of Ire or of pryue hate that noryssheth rancoure in herte as after I shal declare.

Thenne cometh eke bytternes of herte Through whycher bytternesse euery good dide of hys neyghbour semeth to hym bytter and vnsauoure.

Than comyth dyscorde that vnbryneth alle maner of frenshyp.

Thenne comyth scornynge of hys neyghbour al doo he neuer so well. thenne comyth accusynge as whan man seken occasyon to annoyne hys neyghbour. whiche that is lyke the craft of the deuyl that wpyth bothe nyght and daye to accusen vs alle.

Thenne cometh malynyte through whycher a man nopeth hys neyghbour pryuely yf he may.

And yf he nought may algate his wycked wyl shal not wane as for to brene his hous pryuely or en-

poysen hym or flee hys bestys and semblable thynges.

Now wyl I speke of the remedye of this foule synne of enuie.

And the first is the loue off god pryncypally and lounge of hym self and of hys neyghbour.

For sothly that one may not be without that other. And cryst wyl in the name of thy neyghbour þ thou shalt vnderstonde thy broder. For certes al we haue one fader flesshly and one moder that is to saye Adam and Eue. And eke one fader spirytuel. that is to saye god of heuen.

Thy neyghbour art thou holde for to loue and wyl hym alle goodnes. And therefore sayth god. loue thy neyghbour as thy self that is to saye to lyf and to soule and saluation.

And more ouer thou shalt loue hym in worde and benygne chere and monysshyp and chastyshynge in a voyce to comforte hym and praye for hym wyth alle thy herte. And in dede thou shalt loue hym in suche wyse þ thou shalt do to hym in charite as thou woldest were don to thy owne persone. And therefore thou shalt doo to hym no damage in wycked worde ne harme in his body ne in his castel ne in his soule by entysynge of wycked ensample. Thou shalt not desyre his wyf ne none of his thynges. vnderstonde eke that in the name of thy neyghbour is comprehendyd his enemye. certes a mā shal loue his enemye for the commaundement of god. a sothli thy frende shal thou loue i god



I saye the enemye shalle thou loue  
 for goddys sake by his commaun-  
 dement. For it were reson a man  
 shold hate his enemye. for soth god  
 wyl not receyue vs to his loue that  
 ben his enemyes. Apenst thre maner  
 wronges that his enemye doth to him  
 he shal doo thre thynges as thus. a-  
 penst hate and rancoure of herte he  
 shal loue hym in herte. apenst thy-  
 dyng and wycked wordes he shall  
 praye for his enemye. Apenst the wic-  
 ked dede of his enemye he shall doo  
 hym bounte. for cryste sayth loueth  
 youre enemyes & prayeth for hem þ  
 spelyth you harme & eke for them þ  
 pow chasen and pursuen & doo boun-  
 te to hem that you haten.  
 So thus commaunded vs our lord  
 Ihesu Cryste to do to oure enemyes  
 for soth nature dryueth vs to loue ou-  
 re frendes. And persey oure enemyes  
 haue more nede to loue than our fren-  
 des. And they that more nede haue  
 Certes to hem shal we doo goodnes.  
 and certes in that dede haue remem-  
 braunce of the loue of Ihesu Cryste  
 that deyde for his enemyes. And for  
 as moche as that loue is the more gre-  
 uous to perfourme. so moche is mo-  
 re grete the meryte. And therfore the  
 soupyng of our enemye hath confor-  
 med the benygn of the deuyl. For  
 ryght as the deuyl is conspyted by hu-  
 mpyte. Right so is he wounded to  
 the dethe by the loue of our enemye.  
 Certes than is loue medycine that  
 chaseth out the benygn of enemye fro  
 manys herte.

Sequitur de Ira

After enemye wyl I decla-  
 re of the synne of Ire.  
 a For soth he that hath  
 enemye vpon his neygh-  
 bour. Anon compynly wyl finde him  
 mater of wrath in worde or in dede.  
 Apenst hym to whom he hath enemye  
 for sothly he that is proud or enuy-  
 ous is lyghthly wroth. This synne of  
 Ire after dyscrypynge of saynt Au-  
 gustyn is wycked wyl to be auen-  
 gyd by worde or by dede.  
 Ire after the Pphylosophre is the fer-  
 uent bloode of man y quykely in  
 his herte. thurgh whiche he wyl har-  
 me to hym that he hateth.  
 For certes the herte of a man by en-  
 chafynge and meynge of his bloode  
 wepyth so troubled that he is out of al  
 Iugement of resons. But ye  
 shul vnderstonde that Ire is in two  
 maners. Don of them is goode and  
 that other is wycked.  
 The good Ire is by Ielousye of god-  
 nes thurgh the whiche a man is wro-  
 the with wyckednes and agayn wic-  
 kednes. And therfore sayth the  
 wyse man that pre is better than pla-  
 ye. this Ire is wpyth deboneprie and  
 it is wrath wythout bytternes not  
 wroth agaynst the man. but wroth  
 with the mysdede of the mā as saith  
 the pphete. Irascimini et nolite pec-  
 care. Now vnderstode þ wycked pre  
 is in two maners þ is to say sodeyn  
 pre or hasty pre wythout awpement



## The Persons Tale

and consentyng of hys reson. The meynyng and the sense of this is that reson of a man ne consentith not to that sodeyn pre. And than it is denyd al Another pre is that is ful wycked that cometh of feloupe of herte auyfed & cast byfore wyth wycked wyl to doo vengeance. & therto his reson consentyth & sothly this is dedely synne. This pre is so displeysant to god that it troubllyth his hous and chasith the holy goost out of mannys soule and put in hym the seknes of the deuyl and benymeth the man fro god that is his righful lord This pre is a ful grete plesaunce to the deuyl for it is the deuilles furneyns that he enchaunsith with the fyre of helle. For certis as fyre is more myghty. to dystrope erthly thynges than a nother element. Right so ire is myghty to dystrope alle spiritualle thynges. Loke how that fyre of smale gledes þ be almoost dede vnder asshen wyl quycken ayeu whan they be touchid with brymstone. right so pre wol euer more quycken ayeu whan it is to chyde with pryde þ is couerdy in mannys herte. for certis pryde may nat come out of no thyng but if it were first in the same thing naturallly. as fyre is drawyn out of flyntes with steel. right so is pryde a mater of pre. right as rancour is norissht & kept therof There is a maner tree as sayth saynt Isidore. That whan men make fire of that tre and couer the colys of hit wyth asshen. Sothly

the fyre therof wol laste al a yere or more. And ryght so farith it by rancour. Whan he is ones conceyued in the hertes of somme men. Certes it wyl laste perauenture from one efter day tyl on other or more. But certes þ man is ful fetre from the mercy of god al that whyle. In this forsayde deuillys forneys they forgen thre shrewys. Pryde than bloweth and encreaseth the fyre by chydyng & wycked wordes. Thenne stondesth enuie and holdeth the pryncyple vpon the hertes of men. wyth a prayer of long tonges wyth longhe rancour. And thenne stont the synne of contynuell stryf and chere and berith and forgyth the vylayns reprovynge. Certes this cursyd synne anoyeth both the man hym self and eke his neyghbour. for sothly almost al the harm that one man doth to his neyghbour cometh of wrath. for certis outrageous wrath doth al that euer the deuyl commaundeth hym for he spareth nether for Crist ne for his swete moder in his outrageous anger and pre but speketh and skandryth his neyghbour. this is a cursyd lyf whiche lyf shold be debonayr & sprytle that shold kepe his soule Certes this pre or wrath bynymeth eke godys due lordshyp & that is mannys soule & the loue of his neyghbours. it stryuyth alway eke aynst trouthe it reueth hym the quete of his herte and subuertith his soule Dsyre comen thysc synkyng engendrures. first hate þ is olde wrath renewyd



through whiche a man forsaketh  
his owen friend that he hath lound so  
long. ⁊ thenne comyth werre ⁊ euery  
maner of wrong þ a man doth to  
his neyghbour in body or in catel.  
Of this cursyd synne of Ire cometh  
eke manslaughtre. And vnderston-  
deth wel þ manslaughtre is in dpuer  
se wyse. Somme maner of mans-  
laughtre is spiritual. And som bode-  
ly Spyrituell manslaughtre is in vi-  
thynges. first by hate as sayth seint  
John he that hateth his broder is an  
homycide. Manslaughtre is eke by  
Bacptyng of whiche Bacptour sai-  
th salamon that they haue two swer-  
dys wyth whiche they sle her neygh-  
bours. for sothly as wycked it is to  
benyme his good name as his lyff.  
homycide is eke in peyning of wyck-  
ed counceyl by fraude. or for to pe-  
ue counceyl for to areyse wrangfull  
customys and talagys of whiche spe-  
keth Salamon. Upon roryng and  
bere hungry ben lykenid to cruel sor-  
des In wythholdyng or abredgyng  
of the hyre or wagys of poure folke  
for whiche the wyse man sayth fe-  
de þe hym that almost dyeth for hun-  
gre. for sothly but þ thou fede hym  
thou sleepest hym. And al thys ben de-  
dely synnes. Bodely manslaughtre  
is whan thou sleepest hym wyth thy  
tunge. Another maner is whan thou  
commaundest to sle a man or ellys  
peuest hym counceyl to slee a man  
Manslaughtre in dede is in four ma-  
ners. That one is by lawe. ryght as

a Justice damped hym that is culpa-  
ble to the deth. but lete the Justice be.  
waar that he do it rightfully and þ  
he doo it not for deylte to spyle blood  
but for keepyng of right wysnes. A-  
nother homycide is don for necessite  
as whan a mā sleeth another his de-  
fendaunt and that he ne may other-  
wyse ascape fro his owen deth. But  
certeyn aud he may escape wythout  
slaughtre of his aduersarpe ⁊ sleeth  
hym he doth synne. And he shal bere  
penaunce as for dedely synne. Eke  
þ a man by caas or auenture shete  
an arowe or cast a soon wyth whi-  
che he sleeth a man it is homycide.  
Eke þ a woman by necligence o-  
uersyth her chyldre in slepyng It is  
homycide and dedely synne. Eke  
whan a man destroyeth conception  
of a chyldre or makyth a woman ba-  
reyn by drynkes of benymous her-  
bes through whiche she may not con-  
ceyue. Dr sleeth her chyldre by dryn-  
kes. or ellys putteth certeyn materys  
al thyng in her secrete place to sle her  
chyldre Dr ellis doth vnkynde synne  
by whiche man or woman shedyth  
his nature in place there as a chyldre  
may not be conceyued. Dr ellis þ a  
woman haue conceyued ⁊ hurte her  
self ⁊ sleeth her chyld. þet is it homy-  
cide what saye we eke of women þ  
murdren her chyldren for drede of  
wordely shame. Certes it is eke  
an horryble homycide. Eke  
þ a man aproche to a woman by  
desyre of lecherpe through whiche the  
chyldre is perpysshed ellys smyteth a



## The Persons Tale

woman wepyngly by which her chil  
 de is slayn Alle thys ben homycides  
 and dedely horribly synnes. yet co-  
 myn of pre many moo synnes as in  
 worde in thought in dede as wel as  
 he that aretteth vpon god or blasphe-  
 myth god of whiche he is hym self  
 gylty or dyspyseth god and alle his  
 halowes as donthys cursyd hasour  
 dours in dyuerse contrees. This cur-  
 syd synne do they whan they seplen  
 in her herte ful wyckedly of god &  
 hys halowes Also whan they treten  
 ynworthely the sacrament of the a-  
 wter Thyslike synne is so grete. that  
 bnnethe may it be reledid but þ the  
 mercy of god passyth his werkys  
 whiche mercy is grete and benygne.  
 There cometh also of pre a tery an-  
 ger whan a man is sharply amones-  
 shed in his strift to forlete hys synne  
 Than wyl he be angry and answere  
 re okprly & angerly to defende or ex-  
 cuse his synne. by vnstedfastnes of  
 his flessh. or ellys he dyd it for to hot-  
 de company wyth his felawes. or els  
 as he sayth. the fende entysed hym or  
 ellys he dyd it for his yowth or ellys  
 his complexyon is so corageous þ  
 he may not forbere. ellys it is desty-  
 ne as he sayth vnto a certeyn age. or  
 ellys he sayth it comyth hym of gyn-  
 tylnes of his auctyres & semblable  
 thynges Al thys maner of folke so  
 wrappyn them in her synnes þ they  
 wyl not delpuer hem self. for sothly  
 no wyght that excusyth hym wilful-  
 ly of his synne. may be delpuerd off  
 his synne tyl he mekely beknowith

his synne After thenne cometh swe-  
 ryng that is cypres ayenst the com-  
 mandment of god & this be falsyth  
 of anger & of pre. God saith thou  
 shalt not take the name of thy lord  
 in ydyl Also our lord Jhu cryst saith  
 by the worde of saynt mathew. ne  
 wyl ye to swere in al maner. neyther  
 by heuen for it is goddys trone ney-  
 ther by erthe for it is the bench off  
 his feet. ne by iherusalem for it is the  
 cyte of a grite kyng. ne by thyng he-  
 de. for thou ne mayst make an heer  
 whyte ne black. but your othe shal  
 be. ye. ye. nay. nay. And what that is  
 more euyl. thus sayth cryst. for cris-  
 tes sake swere ye not so synfully in  
 dismembryng of Cryst. by soule. her-  
 te. bones. and body. for ye thynke þ  
 the cursyd Jewes dismembryd hym  
 not ynough but ye dysmembre hym  
 more And yf so be that lawe compel-  
 le you to swere thenne rule you af-  
 ter the lawe of god in your sweryng  
 As sayth saynt Thierome the fourth  
 chappytre. Thou shalt kepe  
 thre condicions. Thou shalt swe-  
 re in trouth. in dome & in right wys-  
 nes. This is to save thou shalt  
 swere soth. for euery lespug is ayenst  
 Cryste. for Cryste is very trouth.  
 And thynke wel this that euery grete  
 sweter not compellyd laussfully to  
 swere. the plaghe of vengeaunce shal  
 le not parte from hys hows whyles  
 he dysyth suche vnlawful swerynge.  
 Thou shalt eke swere in dome when  
 tho art copellyd by the domes mā to



## The Persons tale

Wytnesse the trouthe. & ke thou shalt not swere for enuie. for sauour. for mede but for rightwysnes for declarng of trouthe to the worship of god & to helpng of thyne eyen crysten. & therfor euery man that takyth goddis name in ydle or falsly swereth wpyth his mouth. or ellys taketh on hym the name of cryst to be callyd a crysten man and lyueth apenst crysten lyuynge & his techynge. Al they take goddis name in ydle. Loke eke what saith saint peter actuum quar to. there is none other name vnder heuen geuen to man in whiche they moot be sauyd. That is to saye but in the name of Ihu cryst. Take kepe eke how that precious name off Ihu cryst as sayth saynt Poule at philypenses In nomine Ihu etc.

That in the name of Ihu euery kene of heuynly creature or ertthly or of helle shol lowen. for it is so high & so worshipful that the cursyd fende in helle shold tremble for to here hit named than semed it that men þ swere so horrybly his blessed name that they despyse it more boldly than dyd the cursyd Jewes þ tremeleden whan they herde his name. Now cetes syth þ swerynge but it be doo allawfully is so hooly defenden moche werse is for to swere falsely & eke nedeles.

What saye we eke of them that delpyten them in swerynge and holde it a gentryce or manly dede to swere grete othis. and what of them that of very vsage necessity not to swere grete othes and al the cause not worthe

a strawe. Certes this is horryble synne. Swerynge also wpythout awpysement is eke synne. But late vs goonow to that cursyd and horryble swerynge of adiuration and conuenciacion as don thys fals enchauntours and nygromancers in basyns ful of water Dr in a bygght swerde. In a circle or in a fyre. or in a sholdre boon of a sheep I can not saye but they do cursydly & dampnably apenst criste and alle the feith of holy chirche.

What saye by them that belyuen in dym naplis as by slyght or by noyle of byrds and of bestys or by sorte. by nygromancye. by dreames. By chyrchynge of doys by gnawynge of rattys or crackynge of housys and suche maner of wretchydnes. Certes al this thyng is defended of god and eke holy chirche. for whiche they be cursyd tyl the come to amendement. þ on suche fylthe sette their beleue.

Charmys for woldys & maladys of men or of bestys. yf they take ony effect. it may perauenture þ god suffreth it. for men shold gyue the more feyth & reuerence to his name. Now wyl I reke of lesynges whiche generally is fals significaciō of word wpyth entent to disceyue his euen cristen Som lesyng there is of whiche cometh non auauitage to no wyght. And som lesyng cometh to the ese & prouffyt of a man & to domage of a nother man. Another lesyng for to saue his lyf or catel. Another lesyng comyth of delyte. They wyl forge a longe tale and pepnte it with



al circumstauncis wherof al the groun-  
de is fals. Somme lesyng comyth  
for he wyl susteyne his worde. And  
somme lesyng comyth of rechelesnes  
wythouten awysment and sembla-  
ble thynges. Lete vs now touche  
the vyce of flaterye. whiche cometh  
not gladly but for drede or for coue-  
tyse. flatterye is generally wrang-  
ful preyng. flaterers ben the deuyls  
noryces that noryssheth his chyld-  
dren wyth the mylke of losengery.

For soth sayth salamon that flaterye  
is worse than detraction. For somtyme  
detraction makyth an haunteyn  
man be the more humble for he dres-  
deth detraction. But certeyn flaterye  
maketh a man to enhaunce his herte  
and his contenauce. flaterers ben  
the deuyls enchauntours for they  
maken a man to wene hym self be  
lyke. that he is not lyke. They be lyke  
Judas that betrayed god. And thys  
flaterers betraye a man to selle hym  
to this enmye that is the deuyll. flate-  
rers ben the deuyls chappelynes  
that synge euer placebo. I rekene  
flaterye in vyces of Ire. For ofte tyme  
yf a man be wroth with another  
thenne wyl we flatere somme wyse  
ght to susteyne hym in his quarelle.

Speke we now of suche cursing  
as comyth out of proude hertes. Ma-  
nyson may be sayd generally euery  
maner power of harm. suche cur-  
syng beteuech a man the regne of god.  
As sayth saynt Poule. And of suche  
cursyng wrongfully retorneth aye  
to hym that cursyth. As a vynde

retorneth agayn to his owne neste.  
And ouer alle thyng men ought les-  
cherre to curse her chyldren and to pe-  
ue to the deuyll her engendrure as fer-  
forth as in hem is. Certes it is a  
grete peryl and a grete synne. Lete  
vs then speke of chydnyng and repre-  
uyng whiche ben grete woundes in  
mannys herte. For certes vnnethe  
may a man be playnly accorded with  
hym that he hath openly reuyled. re-  
prouyd and dysclaundred this is a  
ful gryfly synne. As Cryste sayth in  
the gospel. And take ye kepe now  
that he þe reproveth his neyghboure  
by some harme or by somme peyn þe  
he hath in his body. as mesyl. croked  
harlote: or by somme spgane tha he  
doth. Now yf he repreueth hym  
by harm of peyne. thenne retorneth  
the repref to Ihesu Cryste. For peyn  
is sent by the right wys sonde of god  
and by his suffraunce. be it meselyre  
or mayne or maladye.

And yf he repreue hym vncharyta-  
bly of synne. thou holour. thou drow-  
kelewe harlot and soo forth thenne  
apperteyned it to reioysyng of the de-  
uyll that euer hath ioye that men don  
synne. And certes chydnyng may not  
come but of vyleynous herte. For  
after haboundaunce of the herte spe-  
keth the mouth ful ofte. And ye shul  
vnderstonde whan ony man chasty-  
seth another þe bewar fro chydnyng  
or repreuyng. For trewly but he be-  
waar he may ful lyghtly quyleken  
the fyre of angre and of wrath whi-  
che that he shal not quench.



The Persons take

He all your  
 will for refuse  
 some est a  
 refuse est  
 est refuse  
 He that in your  
 refuse will  
 est in age all  
 refuse will for  
 refuse  
 refuse in  
 refuse  
 book  
 The  
 found  
 your son is  
 for him  
 honor of his  
 book

that is reprevd. To what sayth  
saint Austyn There is no thing like  
the deuylls chylde as he that oft chy  
deth. Saynt Poule sayth eke. A ser  
uaunt of god behoue not to chpde.

yet yet is it certes most vncouenable  
betwixt a man and his wif. for  
there is neuer rest And therfor saith  
Salamon. An hous that is vncoue

chydynge wyf but ſhe chyde hym in  
one place ſhe wyl chyde hym in ano-  
ther place. And therfore better is a  
morcel breed wyth ioye. than a houſe  
ful of deyltes wyth chydynge. Lo

smelle the swete sauour of the wyne  
whan it floryssyth. These scorners  
ben partynge felowes wpyth the deuyl  
for they haue Ioye whan the deuyl  
wynneth and sorow whan he leysyth  
They ben aduersaries to Ihesu crys-  
te. For they haten that he souereth that  
is to saue sauacion of so wle. Speke  
we now of the wycked counceyl:

for he that wycked counceyll pe  
ueth is a treptour. for he dyscey  
ueth hym that trusteth in hym. But  
neuwertheles yet is wycked counceyll  
apenst hym self. for as sayth the  
wyse man. Every fals spyung hath  
his properte in hym self. for he  
that wyl anoye another man ano  
yeth first hym self. And men shal vn  
derstonde that a man shal not take  
his counceyll of false folke ne of an  
gry folke or greuous folke ne of folke  
prouen speryally her owen prouynt  
ne to moche worldly folke & name  
ly in counceylling of foolis.

Now comyth the synne of them that  
maken discorde among folk. Whi-  
che is a synne that Cryste hateth vt-  
terly. And no wonder is. for he dyed  
for to make concorde. And more  
shame don they to cryst thā dyd they  
that hym crucified. For god loueth  
better that frenshipp be among folke  
than he dyd his owen Body whiche  
he gaf for vnyte. Therefore be they ly-  
kenyd to the deuyll that euer is abou-  
te to make dyscorde. Now comyth  
the synne of double tongue for suche  
as speke fayr befor men and wy-  
kedly behynde. or ellys they make



semblaunt as though they speken of good entencion. or ellys in game & pleye. And they speken of wycked entente Now comyth the wreyng of counceyl. thurgh whiche man is defamed vntethys may he restore the damage. Now comyth manace that is an open folpe. for he that openly manaceth he threteneth more thenne he may ouercome ful ofte tyme.

Now comen ydle wordys þ be wpyth out prouffyt of hym that speketh the wordes and eke of hym that herke nyth the wordes. Or ellys ydle wordes ben tho that ben nedeles or wpyth oute entente of naturell prouffyt.

And al be it that ydle wordes be som tyme benyal synne. yet shalke men doubtte hem. for we shal yete reke nyng of hem before god. Now comyth Iangelynge that may not com wpyth out synne as sayth Salomon It is a spagne of appert folpe

And therfore a phylosophre sayde whan a man ayed hym how men shold plesse And he answeryd do many good werkys & speke fewe Iangelynge. After this cometh the synne of Japers that been the deuyllys appys. for they make folke to longe at her Japerpe as folke don at gwades of an ape. Suche Japers defendeth saynt Poule. Loke how that Vertuous wordes and holy comforten hem that trauepylen in the scruple of Cryst. Ryght so comforten the Bysepys wordes and the knackys of Japers hem that trauepylen in the scruple of the deuyl. All thys ben the

synnes of the tonge that comyn off pyre & of other synnes. The remedye apenst pyre is a Vertu that cleped is mansuetude that is debonepyte. and eke another Vertu that men clepes pacience. saynt Iherome sayth thus of debonapite that it doth harme to no wyght ne sayth none harm that men hym doo ne sayn ne chaungeth not apenst reson. This Vertu cometh somtyme of nature. for as sayth the phylosophre a man is a quye & thynge by nature debonapit and treta ble by goodnes. But whan debonapite is enformed of grace hit is the more worthy. Pacience is another remedye apenst pyre and is a Vertu þ men suffre swetly euery mannes godnes. and is not worth for none harme that is don to hym The phylosopher sayth that pacience is that Vertu that suffreth debonapitly al the outrage of aduersyte. and euery wycked worde. This Vertu maketh a man lyke to god & makyth hym his owen dere chyld. As sayth cryst this Vertu dyscomfyeth thyn enemye.

And therfore faith the wyse man yf thou wolt deynquyssh thyn enemye see that thou be patient. Suffraunce is another Vertu apenst Ire. And þ is whan he suffreth swetly alle anoyauce & the wronges that men do a man outward. Thou shalt vnderstonde that a man suffreth four maner of greuaunce in outward thynges. Aienst which four he must haue foure maner of paciẽce. the first greuaunce is wycked wordes. þ greuaunce suffreth

Jhesu cryst wythout grutchyng wel  
pacyenty whan the Jewes despyced  
hym a reprovdy hym ful ofte. Suf-  
fre thou therfore pacyently. For the  
wyse mā saith yf thou stryue with a  
fool if the fool be wroth or though he  
laugh. Al gat thou shalt haue no rest  
Bother greuaunce outward is to haue  
domage of thy catel. There apenst  
suffred cryst ful pacyently whan he de-  
spoyled was of al þeuer he had in  
this lyf and that nas but clothes.

The thirde greuaunce is to a man to  
haue greuaunce in his body That  
suffred cryst ful pacyently in alle his  
passyon. The fourth greuaunce is in  
outrageous labour in werkis wher-  
fore I say that folk that maken her  
seruauntes to traueylle to greuously  
out of tyme as in holy dayes. Soth-  
ly they doo grete synne. Here apenst  
suffred Cryst ful pacyently a taught  
vs pacyence whan he bare vpon his  
blessyd sholdres the crosse vpon whi-  
che he shold synne despytous deyn. He-  
re may men lerne to be pacyent. For  
certes not only crysten men be pacy-  
ent for the loue of Jhesu Cryst a for  
guerdon of the blisse of heuen and of  
the blessyd lyf that is perdurable.

But certes the olde paynims that ne-  
uer were crystend comendyd and  
vspyd the vertu of pacyence. A phylo-  
sophre vpon a tyme that wold haue  
beteu his disciple for his grete tres-  
paas. for whiche he was greteky a-  
meuyd and brought a yerde to scour-  
ge the chylde And whan the chylde

sawe the yerde he sayd to his mayst-  
er what wyl ye do I wyl bet the qd the  
master for thy correctio for soth quod  
the chylde ye ought fyrst correcte your  
self that hath lost your pacyence for  
the gylt of a chylde. For soth said the  
master al wepyng thou seyst soth  
haue thou the yerde my dere sone a  
correct me for myn vnpacyence. Off  
pacyence comyth obedyence thurgh  
whiche a man is obedyent to crist a  
to alle them to whiche he ought too  
be obedyent to cryst. And vnderston-  
de wel þ obedyence is perspyght whā  
men doo gladly and hastely wyth  
good herte entierly al that he sholde  
doo obedyence generally is to pee-  
fourme the doctryne of god and to  
his souerayns to whiche hym ought  
to be obeyssaunt in al rightwysnes.

#### Sequitur de Accidia

After the synne of wrath I  
a wyl speke of the synne off  
accidye or slouth. For en-  
uie blyndeth the herte of man. And  
ire troubleth a mā And accidye ma-  
keth hym heuy thoughtful and wra-  
we. Enuie a ire maken bitternes in  
herte. whiche bitternes is moder off  
accidye and benymet him the loue of  
alle goodnes. thenne is accide the an-  
gre of a trouble herte. And Saynt  
Austyn sayth It is anoye of good-  
nes and annoye of harme.

Certes this is a dampnable synne  
for it doth wronge to Jhesu Cryst  
te in as moche as he benymeth the



seruyre that men ought to do to Ihesu Cryste wyth al dyligence.

As sayth Salamon. But accyde doth none suche dyligence. He doth alle wyth annoye & wraunes slaknes. excusacion dulnesse and vnlust.

For whiche the booke sayth acur. syd be he that doth the seruyse of god. nedygently. thenne is accyde enemye to euery estate of man for the estate of man is in thre maners. Epyther it is estate of Innocence as was the state of Adam before or that he syl in synne in whiche estate he was holde to worche as in heeryng and adouryng of god.

Another estate is estate of superfluyte. In whiche estate men beholden to laboure in prayyng to god for amendement of her synnes.

Another estate is in the estate of grace. In whiche estate is he holden to doo werkys of penytence And certes to alle thysse thynges is accyde enemye and contrary for he slouth no besynes at alle. Now certes this foule synne of accyde is eke a ful grete enemye to the lyue. lod of the body. for it hath no purueaunce apenst temporel necessyte. for it is slouthyd and forsluggyd and destropeth alle goodes temporell by rechelesnes. the fourth thyng is that accyde is lyke hem that ben in the peyn of helle by cause of slouth and of her heynnes. For they that be dampned be so bounde that nether may they doo wel ne thynke wel.

Of accyde cometh first that a man

is anoyed and encombyrd to do ony goodnes and maketh that god hath abhomynacion of suche accyde as sayth saynt Iohan. Now comyth slouth that wyl suffre no hardnes ne no penaunce for soth slouth is so delycate and so tendre as sayth salamon that he wyl suffre non hardnes ne penaunce and therfore he shendeth al þe he doth. Apenst this roten horpyd synne of accyde or slouth the sholde men exerceyse hem to do good werkys & manly and vyrtuously catchen corage wel to doo. Thynkyng that our lord Ihesu Cryste quyteth euery good dede be it neuer so lytyl vsage of it is a grete thyng. for it maketh as sayth Saynt Bernard the laboret to haue strong armys and harde synewys. And slouth maketh hem feble and tendre.

Than comyth drede for to begynne to wer ony good werkys. For certes he that is enclyned to synne hym thynketh it is to grete an empyse for to vndertake to doo werkys of goodnes as sayth Saynt Gregore.

Now comyth wanhope that is dyspayr of the mercy of god that comith somtyme of to mykyl outrageous sorowe and somtyme of mykyl drede ymagynyng that he hath doo so moche that it wolde not auaylle him though he wold repente hym and do goode. Thruugh whiche dyspar or drede. he aboundeth his herte to euery maner synne. As sayth Saynt Augustyn. whiche þ is dampnable



ys it contynue to his ende. it is cleped  
synnyng in the holy ghoost.

This horribble synne is so perryous  
that he that is dyspeyred that there is  
no felyce ne no synne that he doub  
teth for to doo as shewed wel by Ju  
das. Certes therne aboun alle

is this synne most dyspleysaunt and  
most aduersary to Cryst. Certes he  
that dyspeyret is lyke the cowarde  
champon recreaunt and nedeles dis  
peyret. For certes the metey of god  
is euer redy to the penytent. But is  
aboue al his werkys. Alas can not  
a man bethynke hym on the gospel  
of saynt Luke. Luke xv. where as  
Cryst sayth that as wel shalke there  
be more Joye in heuen vpon a syn  
ful man that doth penytence than v  
pon nyenty and ix. ryghtfull men  
h neder no penytence. To ke fether in  
the gospel the Joye and the festis off  
the good man that had lost his sone  
whan his sone wyth repentaunce was  
retorned to his fader. Can they not  
remembrecke as sayth saynt Luke  
xxiii. How that the theef that was  
hanged besyde Ihesu. Sayde lord re  
membre on me whan thou comest  
to thy regne for soth said Cryst. this  
day shalt thou be wyth me in para  
dys. Certes there is none soo horribble  
synne of man that it ne may in hys  
lyf be destroyed by penytence thrugh  
Vertu of the passyon of Cryste.

Alas what nedeth man thenne to be  
dyspeyred sythen his mercy is so re  
redy. aske and haue. Thenne co

meth sompnulence that is sluggy  
slumbyng whiche makyth a man  
to be heuy and dul in body and in so  
wle And this synne cometh of slouth  
And certes the tyme as by weye off  
reson men shold not slepe that is by  
the morowe but ys it were cause reso  
nable. for soth in the morow is most  
counaible a man to say his preyers  
& for to thynke on god & to honou  
re god and to gyue almes to the pou  
re that first comen in the name off  
cryst. Lo what Salamon sayth.  
who so wyl by the morowe a wake  
to seke me he shal fynde me.

Thenne cometh nelygence or reche  
lesnes that rekyth of no thyng.

And how that Ignorauce is moder  
of alle harme. Certes nelygence is  
the noryce. nelygence doth no force  
whan he shold doo a thyng whether  
he doo it wel or badly. Of the reme  
dye of thysse two synnes as sayth the  
wyse man that he that dredeth god  
sparyth not to doo that hym ought  
to doo. And he that soupyth god wyl  
do dysgence to plesse god by his wer  
kys and habounden hym self wyth  
at his myght wel for to doo. Thenne  
cometh ydlenes that is the pate of all  
harmys an ydle man is lyke to a  
place that hath no wallys the deuyll  
may entre on euery syde. This ydles  
nes is the thurrozk of alle vyleyns &  
wycked thoughtes and of alle Jan  
glys. triffys & al ordure. Certes heue  
is geuen to hem that wyl laboure &  
not to ydle men. Eke dauid sayth.



## The Persons tale

That they be not in the labour off men ne they shall not be whyped wyth men that is to save in purgatory. Certes thene semyth it they shall be tormentyd wyth the deuyll in hel. But yf they doo penytence. Thene comyth the synne that men clepen trodytas as whan a man is so lettid and so tarped or he wyl turne to god and certes that is a grete folye. he is lyke hym that falleth in the dyche & wyl not aryse. And this vice comyth of fals hope that he thynketh that he shalle lyue long but that hope fayleth fute oft. Thene comyth laches that is he that whan he begynneth any good werke anon he wyl forsake it and stynte as doo they that haue any wyght to gouerne and take off hym ne kepe. Anon as they synde or ny contrarpe or any anoye. Thys ben the newe shepherdes that leten her sheep wytyngly goo renne to the wolf that is in the breres and do no force of her owen gouernance. Off this comyth pouerte and destruction both of spirituel and temporel thynges. Thene comyth a maner of coldnes that freseth alle the herte of man. Thene comyth vndeouocion thurgh whiche a man is so blont. As sayth saynt Bernard and hath suche languour in his soule that he ne may rede ne synge in holy chyrchen e here ne thynke of deuocion ne traueple with his hondes in no good werke but it is to hym vnsauoye and alle apaslyd thene weyith he sore sluggyshe

and slumbry & soon wyl he be wroth and soon is enclyned to hate and to enuye. And thene comyth the synne of worldy sorowe. that is clepyd tristitia. that sleeth a man as saith saint Poule. For certes suche sorowe werkyth to the deth of the deth of the soule and of the body also. For therof comyth that a man is anoyed of his owen lyf for suche sorowe shorpyth the lyf of many a man or that his tyme come by waye of kynde. Apenst this horryble synne of accideye & the braunchis of the same there is a vertue that is called fortitudo or strengthe that is affection thurgh whiche man despyseth alle other thynges vnyous. This vertu is so myghty and so bygorous that it dar wyth stande myghtyly & wraile apenst the sawtes of the deuyll and wysely kepe himself fro parrellys that ben wycked. For it enhauntyth & enforseyth the suol. Right as accideye abateth it & maketh it feble for this fortitudo may endure wyth long suffraunce the trauepleys that ben couenable. This vertu hath many spyes the first is cleped magnanymyte that is to save grete corage. For certes there behoueth grete corage apenst accideye lest that hit swalowe the soule by the synne off sorowe or destrope it wyth wanhope. This maketh folke to vndertake hard and greuous thynges by her owen wyl wysely and resonably. And for as moche as the deuyll fighteth a penst man more by queyntise and by



## The Persons Tale

theyght than by strengthe therfore a man shal wythstande hym by wyl by reason and by discrecion. Thenne ben there the vertues of feyth and hope in god and in his sayntes to achyue and complishe the good werkis in whiche he purposeth firmly to continue. Thenne comyth sewerte and sykernes. And that is whan a man doth and perfourmeth grete werkys of goodnes that he hath begonne. And that is the ende why men sholde doo good werkys. for in the complisshing of good werkys lieth the grete guerdon. Thenne is the confidence that is stablenes of courage. And this shold be in herte by stedfast feyth and in mouth and in berynge in chere and in dede. And there ben no special thyngys and remedies a penynt accorde in dyuerse werkys and in consyderacion of the payne of helle and of the Joye of heuen. And in trust of the grace of the holy ghoost that wyl geue hym myght to persurme his entente.

### Sequitur de Avaricia.

After Accorde now we shal  
a speke of auarice and of couetyse of whiche synne said Saynt Poule. The rote of al synne is couetyse. for sothly whan the herte of a man is confounded in hit self and troublid and that they soule hath lost the comforte of god. Thenne seeketh he an ydle solas of wordly thyng

ges. Auarice after descripcion of saint Austyn is a licherousnes in herte to haue erthely thynges. Somme other folke that auarice is for to purchas se many erthly thynges and nothing geue to hem that haue nede. And vnderstonde well that auarice is not only in good and in catel. but somtyme in science and in glorie and in e uery outrageous thynges is auarice and couetyse And the difference by twene auarice and couetyse is this. Couetyse is for to coueyte suche thynges as thou hast not. And auarice is to wythholde and to kepe suche thynges as thou hast wythout ryghtfull nede. Sothly this auarice is a synne ful dampnable for al holy wyrt cursyth it and spekyth ayenst it for hit doth wrong to Ihesu Cryst. for it bereueth fro hym the loue that man to hym owen and turnyth it backward ayenst alle reason and makyth that the auarous man hath more hope in his catel thanne in Ihesu cryst. And therfore sayth Saynt Poule. That an auarous man hath more hope in his thraldom of ydolatre than in god. what dyfference is betwix an ydolastre and an auaricious man. Peraventure an ydolastre hath but one manwment or two. And the auaricious man hath many. for certes euery floren in hys coffre is his manwment. And certes the synne of manwmentrye god forbiddeth in the ten comaundermentis as beryth wyrtues. Exo. xx cap. Thou



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thalt haue no fals goddis biforn me  
ne thou shalt make the no graupd  
thyng But an auaricious man lo-  
upth more his tresour forgyd. And  
thruugh this synne of auaryce & of co-  
uetyse comyth thysse hard lordshippis  
thruugh whiche men bestreyned by ta-  
lagys customs and carpagys more  
than her dute or reson is. Dr ellys tas-  
ke they of her bond men amerccemen-  
tis. whychse myght more resonably  
be callyd extorcionis than amercceme-  
tis. Of whiche amerccementis and  
raunsonyngys of bond men. Some  
me lordys stywardys sayn that it is  
ritghful. for as mykel as a choile  
hath no tresporel thyng that it ne is  
hys lordys as they sayn. But certes  
thysse lordshypis don wrong that be  
reuen her bonde folke thynges that  
they neuer pay hem. Augustynus de  
ciuitate dei libro ix. Sayth that soth  
is that the condycion of thraldom &  
the first cause of thraldom is for sin-  
ne. Genesis 9. Thus may ye see þ  
the gyfte deserueth thraldom and not  
nature. wherefor thysse lordes shold  
not giorpe hem in her lordshypys  
syth that by naturel condycion they  
be not lordes of her thrallys. but that  
thraldom come first by synne. And  
ferthermore there as the lawe sayth þ  
temporel lordys of bonde folke ben  
the goodes of her lordshypys ye that  
is for to vnderstoude the goodys off  
the emperour to defende hem in her  
right but not to robbe hem ne to re-  
ue hem. And therfore sayth Seneca.

Thy prudence shold lyue benygantly  
wyth the thral. that thou clepest thy  
thral ben goddys peple. for humble  
folke ben crystes frendes. they be co-  
tubernyal wyth the lord. Now co-  
myth disceyt betwene marchaunt &  
marchaunt And thou shalt vnder-  
stonde that marchaundyse is in ma-  
ny maners. That one is bodely and  
that other is ghoostly. that one is leef-  
ful and that other is dishoneste and  
vnsuccful. That bodely marchayndy-  
se that is leefful & honest is this. that  
there as god hath ordeyned that a ro-  
pame or a contre is suffycient to hym  
self it is honest and leefful that the ha-  
boun daunce of this contre may hel-  
pe another contre that is more nede-  
ful.

And therfor ther must  
be marchaundyse to bynge from o-  
ne contre to another theyr marchan-  
dyse That other marchaundyse is þ  
men haunten fals othis wyth frau-  
de trecherie and dysceyte wyth lesyn-  
ges cursyd and dampnable Spyr-  
tuel marchandysse is properly symo-  
nye. That is ententyf desyre to thing  
spyrituell That is thyng that apper-  
teyneth to the sentwary of god and  
to the cure of soule. This desyre yf so  
be that a man doo his diligence to  
perfourme it. alle be it that his desy-  
re take none effect. yet is it to hym a  
dedely synne. And yf he be ordred he  
is Irregular. Certes cymonye is cle-  
pyd of Symon magus that wolde  
by temporell catel haue bought the  
pese that god had reuen by the holly  
ghost to seynt peter & to the appostles



## The Persons Tale

And therfore vnderstonde ye that bo-  
th he that sellyth and he that byeth  
thynges spyrituel ben clepyth symo-  
nyaks. Be it catel be it procurynge  
or by flesshly prayers of his frendys  
or off spyrituelle frendes.  
flesshly in two maners as by kyn  
rede and by other frendys. Sothly  
yf they praye for hym that is not a-  
ble ne worthy. it is symonye yf he ta-  
ke the benefyce. And yf he be worthy  
and able it is none. That other ma-  
ner is whan men or women prayen  
for folke to auance hem only for  
wycked flesshly affection that they  
haue to the persones. that is soul sy-  
monye. But certes in serupce for  
whiche men yeven thynges spyrituel  
vnto her seru aunteys it must be vn-  
derstode that the serupce be honest or  
ellys not. And eke that it be wyth  
out bargaynyng and that the perso-  
ne be able. for as sayth Saynt Da-  
mas. Alle the synnes of the world at  
regard of this synne ben as thynges  
of nought. for it is the gretest syn-  
ne that may be after the synne of lu-  
cifer. and of anticryst. for by this  
synne god forlesyth the churche & the  
soule that he bought wyth his precy-  
ous bloode by hem that yeven chyr-  
chis to them that be not dygne.  
for they put in theiue that stelen the  
sowlys of Ihesu. Cryst and destioye  
his patrymonye. By suche vndigne  
preefts and curates haue men the  
lesse reuerence of the sacramentis off  
holy churche. And suche yeuers of  
chirches put out the chyldren of cryst

and put in so chirchys the deuylls  
owen childe. they sellen the sowlys &  
shalke kepe the lambs to the wolf &  
strongele hem. And therfore shal  
they ueuer haue parte of the pasture  
of lambs that is in the blysse of he-  
uen. Now comyth hasardrye wyth  
his appertenauntys as tablys. quar-  
des. and reuellys. Of whiche cometh  
dysceit fals othis. chydnyngs. and al-  
le raueyns. blasphemynge. renynge  
of god. hate of his neyghbours. wast  
of goodys myspeyndyng of tyme.  
And somtyme manslaughter. Cer-  
tes hasardours may not be wyth-  
out grete synne whyles they haunten  
that craft. Of auarice comyth eke.  
lesynge. theft. fals wytnes. and fals  
othes. And ye shal vnderstande &  
these ben grete synnes and expresse  
ayenst the commaundements of god  
as I haue sayde. fals wytnes is eke  
in word and in dede. In worde as to  
byrue thy neyghbours good name  
by thy fals wytnessyng or accusest  
hym by thy fals wytnes. or ellys by-  
cusest thy self falsely. Ware ye quest-  
mongers and notaries. Certes for  
fals wytnes was Iusanna in grete  
forowe and peyn & many another  
mo. The synne of theft is expresse al-  
so ayenst goddys heest & that in two  
maners. temporel & spyrituel. The  
temporel thefte is as for to take thy  
neyghbours catel ayenst his wyl be  
it be force or by slyght be it in meting  
or mesure. by stelyng by fals endyte-  
mentisg pon hym. & in borowynge



## The Persons Tale

thy neyghbours catel in entent neuer to paye and semblable thynges.

Spyrituel theste is sacrilege þis is to save outpynge of holy thynges. or off thynges sacred to Cryst in two maners. by reson of the holy place. As churcheperdys for euery dyolent synne that men doo in suche place may be clepyd sacrilege. Also they that falsely wythholde the ryghtes of holy churche. and pleyne and generally sacrilege is to reue holy thyng out off holy place. or vnholy thyng out off holy place. or holpythyng out of vnholy place.

Now shal ye vnderstonde that reuelynge of auarice is misericorde and pite largely taken. And men myght aue why that misericorde and pyte in reuelynge of auarice. Certes the auarice yons man shewed no pyte ne misericorde to the nedefulman for he deliteth hym in keepynge of this tresour. & not in the rescowynge ne in the releyuynge of euen Crysten. And therefore speke I first of misericorde.

Than is myserycorde as saith the phylosophre a vertu by whiche corage of mā is styred by the mysese of hym þis is mysese. vpon the wiche myserycorde wytr pyte in persouymynge of charytable werkys of mercy helpeth and conforteth hym that is mysese. And certes this meuyth men to the myserycorde of Ihesu crist that hym self suffryd for our gylt he suffred deth for myserycorde and forpaf vs our orgynal synnes and therby relecyd fro the peyne of helle &

arenuyrd the peyn of purgatorie. The spyces of misericorde ben as for to lene and eke for to peue And for to forpeue and for to relete. and for to haue pyte in herte and compassy on of myschyes of thyng euen crysten And eke chastyte there as nede is.

Another remedye a peny auarice is resonable larges. But sothly her be houeth the consyderacion of our lord Ihesu Cryst and of his grace and of his temporel goodys and eke off the goodys perdurable that crist yaf vs. And eke to haue remembraunce of the deth that he shal depe and receyue. And he woot not whan And eke that he shal forgoon alle that he hath dyspendyd and gotten in goodys.

But for as moche as somme folke be vnnemesurable. men oughten escheue fool largesse þ men clepen waste

Certe he that is fool large he yeueth pot his catel but he lesyth his catel Certes what thyng that he yeueth for beyngeforpe as to minstrels and to folke that bere his renome in the world he hath doo synne and none almes. Certes he that lesyth fool his good and seketh no thyng but synne. He is lyke to an hors that seketh rather to drynke dropp water a troublly thā water of the clere welle To hem apperteynen the malyson þ Cryste shal peue atte day of dome to hem that shul be dampned.

*Sequitur de Gula.*



After auarice comyth glotonye. whiche is expresse a  
penst the commaundement  
of god. Glotonye is vnumesurable  
appetyte to ete or to drynke. or ellys  
to ete vnumesurably & out of tyme  
more than nedeth is glotonye. This  
synne corruptid al this worlde as is  
wel shewyd in the synne of Adam &  
Eue. Lo eke what sayth saynt Pou  
le of glotonye. Many men sayth he  
of whiche I haue oft sayde you. and  
now I saie it wepyng that they be en  
nemyes of the crosse of cryst. Of whi  
che the ende is deth and of whiche her  
wombe is her god. and her glorie in  
confusion of hem that so setuyn er  
thely thynges. He that is vsaunt to  
this synne of glotonye. He may no  
synne wythstonde. He mote be in ser  
uage of alle vyces for it is the deuyll  
ys horde there he hydeth hym in and  
restyd. This synne hath many spy  
ces. The first is dronkenes. that is  
the horryble sepulture of manys re  
son. And therfore whan that a man  
is dronke he hath lost his reson and  
this is dedely synne. But certes whā  
a man is not wont to straunge dryn  
kis & perauerture knowyth not the  
strength of the drynke or hath feble  
nes in his hede or hath traueylled thr  
ugh whiche he drynketh the more. all  
be he sodeynly caught with drynke it  
is no dedely synne but venyal. The  
second spyce of glotonye is. that the  
spyrte of a man wayyth alle trouble  
for dronkenes bereueth hym discre

cid of his wyte The thirde spire of gloto  
nye is whan a man deuoureth hys  
mete and hath no rightful maner of  
etynge. The fourth is whan throught  
the grete habundaunce of his mete.  
the humours of his body ben distem  
peryd The fyfthe is forgetefulnes by  
to moche drynkyng. For whiche a  
man forgetyth by the morowe what  
he dyd ouer Eue. In another maner  
ben distyncte the spyces of glotonye  
after saynt Gregore. The first is for  
to ete before tyme. The secōd is whā.  
a man getyth hym to delycate mete  
The thyrde is whan a man taken to  
myxplouer mesure.

The fourth is curyosyte wyth grete  
entente to maken and apparaylle  
his mete. The fyfthe is for to ete gre  
dely. And these ben the fyue spyngers  
of the deuyllys honde by whiche he  
drawyth folke to synne. Apenst glo  
tonye is the remedye abstynence off  
his body and sayth Galylene. but þ  
holde I not merytorye yf he doo hit  
only for hele of hys body. Saynt  
Austyn wole þ abstynence be do by  
vertu and wyth patience. Abstynen  
ce he saith is lytyl worth but yf he ha  
ue good wyll. & but he be enforad by  
patience & by charyte And þ men do  
it for goddys sake. & in hope to haue  
the blysse in heuen The felaws of  
abstynence ben attemperaunce that  
holdeth the mene in al thynges eke  
shame þ eschewyth al dysshonestie sus  
fisauce þ seeketh no riche metys ne  
drynkes ne doth no force off none ou  
trageous appareplyng of mete.



Also that restreyneth by reson the delaupe apetyte of etyng and drynkyng. Sobrenes also that restreyneth the outrage of drynke. Sparyng also that restreyneth the dylicate ease to spytte long at his mete. wherfore somme folke stonden of her oweren wyfles whan they ete by cause they wyl ete at lasse leyser.

Sequitur de Luyuria.

After Glotenye thenne com  
a myth lecherye. for thysse two synys ben so nygh cosyns that oft tyme they wyl not departe. God woot this synne is full dyspleasunt to god. for he sayde hym selff doo no lecherye. And therfore he putteth gret peynes apenst this synne. For in thold lawe if a woman thral were taken in this synne she shold be belyn wyth stauys to the deth. And yf she were a gentyl woman she shold be slayn wyth stones. And yf she were a bysshoppys daughter she shold be brent by goddys commandement. Furthermore for the synne of lecherye god dreynit alle the world. And after that he brent synners and sanked down in to helle. Now let us speke thenne of the synne of lecherye þ men clepen aduoultre that is of weddyd folke that is to saye yf that one of hem ben weddyd or ellys bothe. Saynt Johan sayth þ thauowtters shulle be in a styntyng brennyng

pytte of fyre and brennyng for lecherie is lykened to brennstone for the stynt of her ordure. Certes the bereyng and brennyng of thys Sacrament is an honnyble thyng. Hit was made of god hym self in paradysse & consermed by Ihesu Cryste.

As sayth Saynt Mathew in the gospel A man shallete fader and moder and take hym to hys wyf. And they shal be two in one flessh. This sacrament betokeneth the kuytting to gyder of Cryste & holy churche. & not onely that god forbad auowtry in dede. But eke he commaunded þ thou sholdest not couepte thy nychtbouris wyf. In this heest saith saint Austyn Almaner couetyse to doo lecherie is forboden. Lo what sayth Saynt Mathew in the gospel who so seeth a woman to couetyse of his lust. he hath don lechery wyth her in his herte. Here may ye se þ not only the dede of this synne is forbode. but eke the desyre to do þ synne. This curfpyd synne anoyeth greuously hem that it haunte & first to the soule. For he obligeth it to synne & to peyne of deth þ is perdurable. & to the body anoyeth it greuously. For it dryeth hym. And of his blood he makyth sacrafyse to the fendes of helle. hit wastyth his catel and his substaunce. & certes yf hit be a foul thing a man to waste hys catel on women. yet is it a fouler thing þ whan for suche ordure women spenden vpon men her catell & substance. This synne as sayth the

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Spencer



## The Persons tale

prophecie bereueth a man & a womā  
her good fame and alle her honoure  
And it is ful playfaunt to the deuyl  
for ther by wyyneth he the most par  
ty of this world. And right as a  
marchaunt delpteth hym moost in  
chaffare that he hath most awaunta  
ge of. Ryght so delpteth the fende in  
this ordure. This is that other hand  
of the deuyl wyth spue fingres to cat  
che the peple to this vilonie The first  
synger is the foule lo kyng of the fol  
woman that sleth right as the basily  
colt sleeth folke by the benym of his  
syght. for couetpse of the eyen folow  
eth the couetpse of the herte. The  
second synger is the vylaynis tou  
chyng in wycked maner. And ther  
fore sayth Salamon. That who so  
touchyth and handelyth a woman.

He faryth lyke hym that handeleth  
the scorpyon that styngeth and so  
deuily sleth thurgh his enuynmyng  
or as who so touchyth pitche he shen  
dyth his syngrys. The thirde is foule  
wordes that faryth lyke fyre þ bren  
nyth that right anon brennyth the  
herte. The fourth is kyssyng. & trew  
ly he were a grete foole þ wold kisse  
the mouth of a brennyng ouyn or of  
a furneyns And more foolis ben they  
that kyssen in bylonye for þ mouth  
is the mouth of helle.

And namely thysse olde do  
tardys holours yet wyl they kyss  
though they may not do and smater  
hem Certes they be lyke to houndys  
for an hound whan he comyth by  
the Roser or by other benchys yf he

may not pisse yet wyl he heue by his  
legge and make contenaunce to pisse

And for that man wenyth that he  
may not synne for lichorousnes that  
he doth wyth his wyf. Certes that  
opynyon is fals Good woot a man  
may sle him self with his owen knif  
and make hym dronk wyth his o  
wen tonne. Certes be it wyf or chyld  
or worldy thyng that he louyd be  
fore god it is his mawment. and he  
is an ydolastre. man shold loue his  
wyf by dyscrecion patiently and at  
temperatly. & than is she as though  
she were his suster. The fyfthe syn  
ger of the deuyls honde is the styri  
kyng dede of lecherie. He gryppeth  
hym by the reynes for to throwe him  
in to the furneyns of helle. there as  
they shal haue the fyre and the wor  
mys that euer shal lastyn. wepyng  
& walynge. sharpe hunger and thirst  
Gripynges of deuyls that shul alie  
to trede hym wythout respite & wyth  
outen ende. Of lecherie as I sayd  
souden dyuerse spyes as fornicat  
ion þ is betwyx man and woman  
that ben not marped & this is dedely  
synne & apenst nature & distrustid to  
nature is apenst nature Persey the re  
son tellyth hym eke that it is dedely  
synne for as moche as god forbade le  
cherie. & saint Poule peueteth him the  
regne þ is due to no wyght. But to  
hem þ dono dedely synne. another syn  
of lecherie is to bereuen a mayde off  
her maydenhede. for certes he þ so dot  
he catchid a mayde out of the hiest de  
gre þ is in this present lyf. & bereueth



## The Persons Tale

her that precious fruyt that the bok  
clepeth the hondred fruyt. I can saye  
it none other wyse in Englyssh. but  
in latyn it hyght centesimus fruyt.

Certes he that so doth is cause of  
many dommages & vyloneys moo  
than ony man can reken. Ryght  
as he somtyme is cause of alle dom-  
magys that bestys doo in the felde &  
breketh the hedg of the colfute thru-  
ghe whiche he dystroyeth & may not  
be restorpd. for certes nomore may  
maydenhede be restored. than an ar-  
me that is smyten fro the body may  
retorne agen to wepe. She may ha-  
ue mercy this woot I wel. yf she do  
penytence. but neuer shal it be. but &  
she is corrupt. And al be it so that I  
haue spoke somewhat of auoultrye  
it is good to shewe mo perylls that  
longen to auoultrye for to eschewe  
the foule synne of aduoultrye. In  
latyn it for to saye thapprochyng of  
another manys bed. through which  
they that were one flessh habounden  
her bodies to other persones. Of  
this synne as sayth the wyse man co-  
me many harmys. first brekynge off  
seyth. & certes seyth is kepe of cryste-  
dome. And whan that kepe is bro-  
ken & lorn certeyn crystendom stan-  
deth wythout fruyt. This synne is  
eke theft for theste generally to spe-  
ke of. is for to reue a thyng of a mā  
apenst his wyl. Certes this is the  
foulest theste that may be whan a  
woman stelet her body from her  
husbond & peucth it to her holour to

defoule it. and stelet her soule from  
cryst and peucth hit to the deuyl.

This is a soule theft for to stele and  
breke the chalis. for thys aduoul-  
teris breken the temple of god spen-  
tuelly and stelen the vessel of grace.  
That is the body and the soule. for  
whiche Cryst shalle destroye hem as  
sayth saynt Poule. Sothly of this  
theft doubtyd gretely Ioseph. whan  
that his lordes wyf prayed hym off  
vylonye whan he sayde. Lo my lady  
how my lorde hath take to me vn-  
der my warde all that he hath vnder  
this worlde. Ne no thyng is out of  
my power but only ye & be hys wyf

And how shold I thenne doo this  
wyckednes and synne soo horryble  
apenst god. Alas al to sptyl is suche  
trouthe now I vnde. The thyrd  
harme is. the splite through whiche  
they breke the commaundement off  
god and defoule the auter of her ma-  
trymonye that is Cryst. For certes  
in so mykyl as the sacramēt of mar-  
ryage is so noble and so dygne soo  
moche it is the gretter synne to bre-  
ke it. for god made marryage in pa-  
radyse in the state of Innocencye to  
multeplie mā kinde to the seruice of  
god. & therfore is the brekynge therof  
greuous. Of whiche brekynge come  
fals heyres. often tyme & wrongfully  
occuppen folkes herptages. & therfo-  
re wyl crist put hem out of the regne  
of heuen that is herptage to good fol-  
ke. Of this brekynge comyth  
eke that folke vnder waar wedde. Di-



in h. l. m. 1. 1. 1.

spinne wyth her owen kynde. And  
namely the herlottis that haunten  
bordellys. Thysse fool women mowe  
be lykened to a comyn gonge where  
as men purge her ordure. What saye  
we eke of putriers that lyuen by the  
horryble spinne of putrye. and con-  
strenge women. ye somune her owen  
wypys or his chyldre as don thysse ba-  
wopys to yelde hem a certeyn rente of  
her bodely putrye. Certes thysse ben  
curssyd synners. Vnderstonde ye eke  
that aduoultrye is sette compulys in  
the ten commaundementis betwene  
theft and manslaugther. for it is the  
grettest thefte that may be. for it is  
theft of body and of soule And it is  
lyke to homycide. for it keryeth a  
two hem that first were made one  
flessh. And by the olde lawe they  
shold be slayn. But neuertheles by  
the lawe of Ihesu cryst that is the la-  
we of pyte. whan he sayd to the wo-  
man that was founde in auoutrye.  
and shold haue be slayn wyth stones  
after the wyll of the Jewys as was  
her lawe. Goo quod Ihesu cryst and  
haue no more wyll to doo synne.

Sothly Vengeaunce of aduoultrye  
is awarded to the payne of helle.

But it be dystourbyd wyth penaunce  
yet ben there mo spyces of this cur-  
ssyd synne as whan that one of them  
is rekygous or ellys bothe. or of fol-  
ke that ben entrid in to ordre as sub-  
deken. or deken. prest or hospitalers  
And euer the hyer that he is in ordre  
the grette is the synne. for they ha-  
ue made grete bowys to kepe chasty-

te. This spinne of brekyng off hys  
auowe of chastyte is whan he recey-  
ued ordre. And soth it is that holy or-  
der is chysse of alle the tresour of god  
and is a special spagne and marke of  
chastyte which that is the moost pre-  
cious lyf that is. And eke this or-  
dred folke ben specially tittled to god  
for whiche whan they doo dedely syn-  
ne. they ben the special traptours off  
god and of his peple. for they lyue  
by the peple to praye for the peple.  
And whyles they be suche traptours  
her prayers auayle not to the peple  
Prestys ben as aungellys as by the  
mystery of her dygnite. But forsoth  
Saynt Poule sayth that sathane  
trausfourmeth hym in an aungel of  
lyght. Sothly the prest that haun-  
tyth synne he may be lykened to an  
aungel of derknes trausfourmed  
in to an aungel of lyght. He semeth  
an aungel of lyght. But forsoth he  
is an aungel of derknes. Suche pre-  
stys ben the sone of hely as is shewed  
in the booke of kynges that they we-  
re the sonys of belyal. that is the des-  
uyl. Belyal is to saye wytheuten  
Juge. And so faren they. hem thyn-  
keth that they be free and haue noo  
Juge nomore than hath a free boile  
that takyth whiche rowe that hym  
lyketh in the toun. So faren they by  
women.

for right as a  
free boile is ynough for alle a toun.

Ryght so is a corrupte Preste y-  
nough for alle a parisshe or a con-  
tre. Thysse prestys as sayth the booke  
know not the mynistry of presthod



## The Persona Tale

to the people ne to god ne they holde hem not apayed as sayth the booke of soden flessh that was to hem of fryd. but they take by force the flessh that is rawe. Certes right so thyle shrewys holde hem not a payed off rostyde flessh and soden wpyth whiche the peple seden hem in grete reuerence. But they wyl haue rawe fleshe as folkys wyrys and her doughsters. And certes theyse women that consentyng to her harlotys do grete wrong to cryste and to holy chyrche to alle halowys and to alle sowlys. For they bereuen hem alle that shold worshyp cryst and holy chyrche And also to prapen for alle crysten soulis And therfore haue suche prestys and her lemmans that consentyng to her lecherie the malyson of the crysten court tyl they come to amendement. The thirde spyce of aduoultry is somtyme betwix a nan and his wyf. And that is whan they take noo regard in theyr assenblyng but only for flesshly delyte as sayth saynt Jerome and reke of nothyng but they be assenblyd by cause they be maryed. Al is good y enough as thynketh to hem. But in suche folke hath the deuyll power as sayde the aungel raphael to Tobye. For in her assenblyng they put Ihesu Cryste out off her herte. and peue hem self to al othere. The fourth spyce is of hem þat assenblyng by her kynrede or of hem þat ben of one assynpte. Or ellys wpyth hem wpyth whom her faders had dehyd wpyth the synne of lecherie. This

synne makyth hem lyke houndes þat taken none hede of kynrede. And certes parentela is in two maners. or ghoosily. flesshly. ghoosily is for to delyn wpyth her gossyds. for right so as a godfader is her fader spyrtuel. For whiche a woman may in no lesse synne semble wpyth her gossyb than wpyth her owen broder The fyrste synne is þat abhomynable synne of whiche no man ought to speke of ne wryte. neuertheles it is openly reherced in holy wryt. Certes holy wryt may not be defouled more than the sonne that shyneth on a donshylle. Another synne apperteyneth to lecherie that cometh in slepyng. And this synne cometh ofte to hem that ben maydens and eke to hem that ben corrupt. And this synne is cleped polucyon. That cometh in foure maners. Somtyme it cometh of languysshynge of the body of man. Somtyme it cometh of Infirmyte for the feblenes of the vertue retentif as phylsophy makyth mencyon. Somtyme of surfete of mete and drynke. And somtyme for dyolente thoughtis þat ben enclosyd in mānys mynde whā he goth to slepe. whiche may not be wpyth out synne For whiche men kepe hem wysely. or ellys may they synne greuouusly. Now cometh remedye agaynst lecherie. & þis generally chastyte & contynēce that refreyneth al dysordynate meuyngys þat comyn of flesshly talentys. And euer the greater meryte shalle he hane that refreyneth most the wycked chuffing



as ordure of this synne. And this is in two maners. that is to save chastite of maryage and chastite of wyrdowhede. Now shalt thou vnderstande that matromonye is lessful assembleng of man and woman that receyuen the vertue of the sacrament. The bonde whiche that may not be departyd in al her lyf. this is to saie whyles they lyue bothe. This is as sayth the booke a ful grete sacrament God made it as I haue sayd in paradys and wold hym self be boyn in maryage. And for to hallowe maryage he was atte weddyng where he touned water in to wyne. whiche was the first myracle þe he wrought in erthe to fore his dysciples. The trewe effect of maryage clenysyth foules carny and replenyssheth holy chyrche of good lygnage. for as the ende of maryage chaungyth dedely synne in to vncypal bytweene hem that been weddyd & makyth the hertes al one as wel of hem as the bodyes. This is very maryage that is stablysshed by god or that ynn began whan naturell lawe was in his right point in paradys And it was ordeyned þa woman shold haue but one man. as sayth saynt Austyn by many reasons fyrst that maryage is fygyred betwene cryst and holy chyrche. And another is that a man is hede of the womā alegyte by ordenaunce it shold be also for yf a woman had mo mo than one. thenne shold he haue mo hēdres than one. And that wete an

haryble thynges before god. And eke a woman myght not please many folke attones. And also there shold neuer be pees ne rest amonge hem for euerich wold aske his owen thyng. And forther more noman shold knawe his owen engendrure ne who shold haue his crytage. And the woman shold be lasse louyd for the tyme þ she were commypt wth many. Now comyth how a man shold bere hym wth his wyff and namely in two thyngys þ is to save iustfayce & in reuerēce & this shewyd fyrst Cryst whan he fyrst woman. for he made her not of Adams heed. for she shold not haue to grete lordshipp for there as the woman hath the masterye she makith to moche disparity. There nede none ensaumpls of this. Theyperpence that we haue day by day ought to suffyre. Also recorde ne he made not the woman of the feet of Adam. for she shold not bee holde to lowe for he can not paciently suffre But god made woman off the Ryb of Adam. for woman shold be folowe vnto man. Man shold bere hym to hys wyf. in fayth. i trouth & in loue As saith saint poule and that men shold loue his wyf as cryst dyd holy chyrche that louyd it so wel þ he deyed for it. So shold a mā for his wyf pf it were nede. Now how þ a woman sholde be subget to her husbond þ tellyth Saint Peter & eke as sayth the decre. A woman as long as she is a wyf. she hath none



## The Persons tale

auctorite to swere ne to bere wytnes wythout leue of her husbond. And also she shold be honest and attemptat of aray. I wote wel that they shol sette her entent to plesse her husbond. But not by queyntise of her aray. Saynt Iherome sayth that wyues ben aparaylled in sylke and in putpore, may not clothen hem in hit cryst. Saynt Gregore sayth eke þat no wyght seketh no precious aray but only þeyn glorie to be honoured the more before the peple. it is grete folwe a woman to haue grete aray outward & her self to be foul inward. A wyf shuld eke be mesurable, in laking, in beynge and in lawshynge & dyscrete in al her wordes and her dedes. And aboue all worldly thynges she shold haue her husbond wyth all her herte and to hym be trewe of her body. So shold euery husbond eke be trewe to his wyf. For sythen alle the body is the husbondes so shold her herte be also. or elles there is betwix hem two no parfayth mariage as in that. Than shalle a man vnderstonde that for thre thynges a man and his wyf mowe assemble. The first for the entent of gendrure of chyl dren to the seruyse of god. For certes that is the cause fynal of matrimony. That other is to yelde eueryche of hem the dette of her body: for nether of hem hath power of his owen body. The third is for the schewe lecherie and bylonie. The fourth forsoth is dedely synne. As to the first it is

mercyforpe. The second also for the dette sayth she hath merite for þat she yeldyth to her husbond the dette of her body. yet though it be ayenst her lykynge and the lust of her herte. The third maner whiche is to schewe lecherie, I holde it no dedely synne. But many of thise be not wythout venyal synne for the corruption and delyte therof. The fourth maner is to vnderstonde yf that they assemble only for amercouse loutre and for none of the forsayd causys but for tacomplyssh the byennynge delyte they recke neuer how ofte. Sothly it is a dedely synne. And yet wyth sorowe somme folke wyl payne hem more to do than her appetit suffyseth. The second maner of chastyte is to be clene wydowe to eschewe the brasynge of man and to desyre them brasynge of Ihesu Cryst. Thise ben tho that haue ben wyues and haue forgoon her husbondes. And eke woman that haue doon lecherie. And be releuyd by penance. And certes yf that a wif can kepe her alle chaste by licence of her husbond. so þat she gaf no cause ne none occasyon that he agylted, thyt were to her grete merite. These maner of women þat obseruen chastyte must be clene in herte as wel as in body and in thought and mesurable in clothynge and in contenance as stymently etynge and in drynkynge. In spekyng and in dede. And thenne is she vessel of the bope of the blessed Maudeleyn that fulfyllle holy churche

## The Persons Tale

ful of good odour. The thyrd man-  
ner of chastyte is Virgynpte.

And it behoupyth that she be holy in  
herte and clene of body. Thenne is  
she the spouse to Ihesu Cryste. And  
she is the lyf of aungellys. She is the  
preyspng of this world and she is as  
thysse martire in Regalpe. She hath  
in her that tinge may not telle.

Virgynpte bare our lord Ihu Crist  
And Virgynpte was hym self. Ano-  
ther remedye aghens lecherpe is spere-  
ally to wythdrawe suche thynges as  
peyn occasion to that bylonpe as  
tyng and drynkynge. For certes  
whan the pot boyleth strongly. The  
best remedye is to wythdrawe the fy-  
re. Slepynge long in grete quete is  
eke a grete norpce to lecherpe. Ano-  
ther remedye aghens lecherpe is that  
a woman or man eschew compaigne  
of hem by whiche he demeth to be  
temptyd for alle be it so that the dede  
be wythstonde yet is there grete temp-  
tacion. Sothly a whyte wal al thou-  
gh it biene not fully by the stynding  
of a candel. yet is the wal black off  
the lyght. In lyke wyse ofte tymes  
suche persones haue euyl name by  
cause they drawe in vicious compa-  
nye. Welofte tyme haue I redde that  
no man trust in his owne perfection  
but he be stronger than Samson.

Holper than Dauid. Wyser than  
Salamon. Now after as I haue de-  
clared yow as I can of the vii. dedes  
of synnes and somme of her braun-  
ches and he remedyes. Sothly yf I

coude I wold telle you the ten com-  
maundementis. but so hygh a doc-  
tryne I lete to dyspynes. But neuer-  
theles I trust to god they be touched  
in this trespase eueryche of hem alle.

Ad huc secunda pars penitencie.

Now as to the second par-  
te of penytence stont in co-  
fession of mouth as I be-  
gan in the second chapytre to fore.

Saynt Austyn sayth synne is in e-  
uery worde and in euery dede. And  
alle that men coueten aghens the la-  
we of Ihesu Cryst And this is for to  
synne in herte in mouth and in dede  
by the fyue wytyps. that ben spght.  
heeryng smellynge. tastynge or sau-  
ryng and felyng. Now is it good to  
vnderstonde the circumstauncis that  
agrudgen mykyl euery synne.

Thou shalt consydere what thou art  
that dost the synne. wheter thou be  
male or female. yong or olde. gentyl  
or thral. fre or seruaunt. wyse or fool.  
hool or sykke. wedded or single. ordred  
or vnodred. clerik or seculer. yf  
she be of the kyntede bodyly or ghoo-  
sly or none. a mayden or none. in  
maner of homicide or none. horryble  
grete synne or smal. and how longe  
thou hast continued in synne.

The thyrd Circumstaunce is the pla-  
ce where thou hast don synne. whe-  
ther in other manys howsis or in  
thy own. In felde or in chirche or  
in chyrperde. In chirche dedycate or



## The Persons tale

non. for yf the churche were halowed and man or woman spylle hys kynde wpythin that place by wey of synne or by wickedy temptation the churche were enterdyted tyl it were reconciled by the bysshop: And the preeft sholde be enterdyted that dyde suche bypsonye. tyme of his lyf and heshold nomore synge masse. and yf he dyde he shold doo dedely synne atte cuery tyme that he song masse. The fourth circumstance is by suche medytours as by messangers or for entysement or for cōsentement to bere cōpanye wpyth felawshyp. for many one for to bere felawshyp wyl go to the decayl of helle. for they that eggyng or consentyn to the synne ben parteners to the synne & of the dampnation of the synnar. The fyfthe is how many tymes that he hath synned and it be in his mynde. and how oft he hath falle. for he that ofte fallyth in synne he despyseth the mercy of god and encrepeth his synne. And is vnkynde to god And he wepyth the more feble to wpythstonde synne. And synneth the more lightly. And the later aryseth. and the more escheweth for to shryue hym. And namely to hym that hath ben his cōfessour for whiche that folke whan they falle aye in her olde solyes they foieten her olde confessours al sterly. Or ellys they departen her shryfte in dyuerse places. But sothly suche departyd shryfte deseruyth no mercy of god for his synnes. The syxte

circumstaunce is this why þa man synneth. as by what temptation. And of hym self procure thylk temptation. or by exceptyng of other folk or yf thou synne wpyth a woman by force or by her owen assent. Or yf a waman magre her heed haue be enforced or not. & whether for couetyse or pouerte. All this shalt thou telle: & yf it was her procuryng or no and alle suche maner thynges. The seuenth circumstance is in what maner he hath doon his synne. or how þe hath suffryd how folke haue don to her. and of the same shalle the mā telle alle the circumstauncis. And yf that he haue synned wpyth romyn bordel women or none. in fastyng tymes or none. or doon his synne in holy tymes or none. or beforn hys shryft. or after hys latter shryfte & hath pauētur therfor broke his penaunce enioyned. bi whos help & whos counceyl. by sorcery or craft. al must betolde thys thynges after that they be grete or smale and grudge the conscience of man or woman. And eke the preeft that is the Iuge may the better be auyssyd of hys Iugement. In peyung hys penaunce. and that shal be after his contrycion. for vnderstonde wel that after tyme þa man hath defouled hys baptyisme by synne. yf he wyl come to sauaciō there is none other weye but penaunce and shryft and satysfaction. And namely by the two. yf there be a confessour to whom he may shryue him

## The Persons Take

And that he first be very contrite and repentaunte And the thyrd yf he haue lye to perfourme it. Thenne shalle man loke and consydere yf he wyl make a trewe and a proffitable confessyon. there must be foure condicions. first it must be in sorowful bitternesse of herte as sayd the kynge Ezechye to god I wyl remembre all the perys of my syf in the bytternesse of my herte. This condycion of bytternes hath fyue sygnes. The first is that confessyon must be shamefaste not for to coueryn ne to hyde his synne But for he hath agylted his god & defouled his soule. And herof sayth Saynt Austyn. The herte traueileth for shame of hys synne. And for he hath grete shamefastnes. he is digne to haue grete mercy. whiche was the confession of the purgycane þ woulde not leste by his eyen to heuen. for he offendyd god of heuen. for whiche shamefastenes he had lost anoone the mercy of god. And therfore sayth saynt Austyn. That suche shamesfast folke ben next forgyuenes & remysyon. That other synne is humylite of confessyon of whiche sayth saynt peter humblyeth you vnder the myghty honde of god in confessyon for therby god forgyueth the synnes for he allone hath power. This humylite shal be in herte and in sygne outward. for ryght as he hath humylite to god in his herte Right soo shold he humble his bodi outward to the preest that spytteyth in goddes place for whiche in no maner. sythyns þ

cryste is souereyn and the preest maie and medyatour bytwee cryste & the synnar. And the synnar is lesse by wepe of reson. Than shold not the synnar spytte as hygh as his confessor. but kuele byforn hym or at his feet But yf maladye destourbe it. for he shal not take kepe who spytte there But in whos place he spytteyth. A man that hath trespaced to a lord and comyth for to aye mercy & make his accorde and sette hym down anon by the lord. Men wold holde hym outrageous and not worthy sone to haue remysyon ne mercy.

The thyrd sygne is that the shryfte shold be foul of teris yf man may wepe. And yf a man may not wepe wyth his bodely eyen lete hym wepe in his herte. Suche was the confessyon of Saynt Peter.

for after he had forsake Ihesu Criste he went out and wepte ful bitterly

The fourth sygne is that he lete not for shame to shryue hym and she we hym hys confessyon. Suche was the confessyon of Dawdelene. that spared for noo shame of hem that were at the feste. for to goo to Our Lord Ihesu Criste and be knowe to hym her synne.

The fyfte sygne is that man and woman be obesaunt to receyue the penaunce that is enioyned hem.

for certes Ihesu Criste for the gyfte of one mā was obedynt to the deith The second condycion of very confessyon is that it be hastily doon.

for certes yf a man had a dedely



## The Persons tale

wounde euer the lenger þ he tarped to warpyſſhe hym. the more wolde hit corrupte and haſte hym to hys deth.

And eke the wounde be the worſe for to hele. Ryght ſo ſarpyth ſynne that longe tyme is in a man vniſhed. Certes a man ought haſtely to ſhewe his ſynne for many cauſes. And for drede of deth that cometh oft tyme ſo ſodenly and is in no certeyn what tyme it ſhal be ne in what place And eke the lenger he tarpeth the ferther is he fro Cryſt. And yf he abyede vnto his laſt daye. ſcarcely may he ſhryue or amende hym for hys ſynnes or repete hym for the greuous maladye of his deth. And for as moche as he hath not his lyf herkenyd Iheſu Cryſte whan he hath ſpoken vnto hym. he ſhal crye vnto our Lord at his laſt day and ſcarcely he ſhal herken hym vnderſtonde þ his condycion muſt haue foure thynges firſt that thy ſhryfte be purged a fore and auyned. And that a man can ſhryue hym of hys ſynnes be it of pryde or of enuye ⁊ ſoo forth wyth the ſpyces and circumſtairncis And that he haue comprehendyd in his mynde the nombre and the gretenes of his ſynnes and how longe he hath leyen in ſynne and eke that he be contryte of his ſynnes and be in ſtedfaſt purpoos by the grace of god neuer eſte to falle aȝen in to ſynne to whyche he is enclyned Alſo thou ſhal ſhryue the of alle thy ſynnes to one man ⁊ not parcelmele to one man ⁊

parcelmele to another. Than is it to be vnderſtonde in the intent to patten thy confeſſyon as for ſhame or drede for it nys but ſtrangelyng in the ſoule. for certes Iheſu Cryſt is al good in hym is none Imperfection: And therfore he forgetteth al parſyghtly. and ellys neuer a deſ. I ſaye not yf thou be aſſyned to the penetauncer for certeyn ſynne that thou art bounde to ſhewe hym al the remenaunt of thy ſynnes of whiche thou haſt be ſhryuen of thy curate but yf it lyke the of thy humylyte. this is no deſpartynge of ſhryfte. ne I ſay not there as I ſpeke of deuyſyon of confeſſyō that yf thou haue lycence to ſhryue the to a discrete ⁊ an honeſt preeſt ⁊ where the lyketh. and by the lycence of thy curate. þ thou ne mayſt well ſhryue the of al thy ſynnes. But leet no blot behynde. lete no ſynne be vntolde as ſer as thou haſt remembraunce. And whan thou ſhalt be ſhryuen of thy curate. telle hym eke al the ſynnes that thou haſt don ſyth thou were laſt ſhryuen. Alſo the very ſhryfte aſketh certeyn condycions. firſt thou ſhalt ſhryue the by thy free wyll not conſtreined ne for ſhame of folke ne for maladye or ſuche thynges. for it is reſon þ he that treſpareth by hys free wyll confeſſe his treſpaas. ne no other man ſhal telle hys ſynne. ne wrath hym aȝenſt the preeſt for hys amoneſſhyng to lete hys ſynne. The ſecond condycion is that thy ſhryfte be lawful. þ is to ſay. thou þ ſhryueſt

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the. & eke the preest that heyrth thy confessyon ben derely in the seyth of ho-  
ly churche. and that a man be not de-  
speyred of the mercy of Ihesu Cryst  
as Capyn and Judas were. And eke  
a man must accuse hym self of hys  
owen trespaas & not another. But  
he shal blame and wpte hym self off  
of his owen malice and of his synne  
and none other. But neuertheles yff  
another man by encheson of enty-  
syng of his synnes. or yf the estate of  
a persone be suche by whiche his syn-  
ne is agredgyd or ellys that he may  
not pleyndly shryue but he telle the  
persone whiche hath synned wpyth.  
thanne may he telle. So that his en-  
tentie be not to bacbyte the persone.  
but only to declare hys confessyon.  
Thou shalt eke make no lesynge in  
thy confessyon for humylyte Pera-  
uenture to saye that thou hast doon  
synnes of whiche thou were neuer  
gylty. For saynt Austyn sayth. yf  
thou by cause of humylyte makyst  
a lesynge of thy self though thou we-  
re not in synne afore. yet art thou in  
synne thenne thurgh thy lesynge.  
Thou shalt eke shewe thy synne by  
thy propre mouth byt thou be dombe  
And not by letter. for thou that hast  
do synne thou shalt haue the shame  
of thy confessyon. Thou shalt not e-  
ke peynite thy confessyon by fayre &  
subtil wordes to couere the more thy  
synne. For thenne begylest thou thy  
self. and not the preest. thou must tel-  
le it pleyndly be it neuer so honyble ne

so foul. Thou shalt eke shryue the to  
a preest that is discrete to counceyl  
the. And eke thou shalt not shryue  
the for beyn gloriene for ypocryse  
ne for no cause but only for the doub-  
te of Ihu Cryst & the hele of thy sou-  
le. Thou shalt not eke renne to the  
preest al sodenly to telle hym lyghtly  
thy synne as who tellyth a iape or a  
tale but auyrsedly wpyth grete deuocy-  
on and generall to shryue the ofter  
than onys of synne whiche thou hast  
be shreuen of. it is the more meryte.  
For as sayth saynt Austyn. Thou  
shalt haue the more lyghtly refere &  
grace of god. both of synne and off-  
peyne. And certes onys a yere at the  
lest weye it is lawful for to be house-  
lyd. for sothly ones a yere al thyng-  
ges renoucelyn.

### Incipit tertia pars penitencie.

¶ We haue I tolde of very  
n confessyon þis is the seconde  
part of penitēce. The third  
parte is satisfaccion. And stondeth  
generally in almes dede and in bode-  
ly payn. Now ben there thre maner  
of almesse contricion of herte where  
a man offryth hym self to god. Ano-  
ther is to haue pyle of defaute of his  
necghbours. The thyrde is in peyn-  
ing of good counceyl and comforte bode-  
ly and ghostely where men haue ne-  
de & namely in substaunce of mānyas  
food. And take kepe þa man hath  
nede of these thyngs generally he



## The Persons Tale

hath nede of food of clothyng and herberow. he hath nede of charitable counceyling and dyspyng in pryson. a maladye and sepulture off dede bodys. And yf thou mayst not vspyte the nedeful wyth thy persone. Visite hym with thy message and thy pestes. These ben the general almeses of werkyng of charite of hem that haue temporel riches or discrecion in couceyling. Of these werkes shalt thou here at the dape of doine thy almesse sholdest thou doo of thy propre thynges and hastely and prouely yf thou mayst. But neuertheless if thou mayst not doo it prouely thou shalt not forbere to do almes though men see it. so that it be not do for thank of the world. but only for to haue thank of our lord Ihesu Cryste. For as wyntnessyth Saynt Mathew A cyte may not be hyd that is sette vpon a mounteyn. Ne men lyght not a lantern and put it vnder a busshel but sytten it vpon a candelstykke to lyghten the men in the hous. Right so shal your lyght. lyghten before men that they may we see your good werkes and gloryfye your fader that is in heuen. Now as for to speke of bodily peyn it stond in prayere. in walking. in fastyng and in vertuous techyng of oryson. ye shal vnderstonde that oryson or prayere is for to save. Appetous Boys of herte that is redressyd in god and expyessing it be worde ourwarde to remeue harmful thynges and to haue thynges spiritual and durable and somtyme

temporel thynges. Of whiche oryson. in the oryson of Pater noster hath Ihesu crist endosyth most thynges. Certes it is prouyleged of thre thynges in his dignyte. for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer for that Ihu cryst hym self made hit and it is short. for it sholde be roud the more lyghtly. and for to wythholde more esely in herte. and helpe hym self the ofter wyth the oryson. And for a man shold be the lesse wery to save it. for a man may not excuse hym to lerne it. it is so shorte and so esy. And for it comprehendith in hym self alle good prayere The pposicion of this holy prayer that is so excellent and so digne I betake to the maysters off theologie. Haue thus moche wyll I save. That whan thou prayest that god sholde foryeue the thy gyltes as thou foryeuest hem that haue agyled the. Be wel ware þ thou be not out of charite This holy oryson amemusyth eke veynal synne. And therefore it apperteyneth specially to penytence. This prayer must be truly sayd in very feyth. and that men praye to god ordynatly. discretely. and deuoutly. Alleday a man shal put his wyll to be subiect to the wyll of god this oryson must eke be sayde wyth grete humblenes and ful pure and honestly. and not to the anoysaunce of any man or woman hit muste eke be contynued wyth werkes of charite. it away. lath eke ayenst the vyces of the soule for as sayth Saynt Iherome.

## The Persons tale

by fastyng be sayrd the byres of the flessh .and by prayers the byres off the sowle. After this thou shalt vnderstonde that bodely peyn stont in wakyng. for Ihesu Cryst sayth wake ye and praye ye that ye ne entre in to wycked temptation. ye shal vnderstonde that fastyng standeth in thre thynges. in forbernyng of bodely mete and drinke. and in forbernyng of worldly Iolytees. And in forbernyng of dedely synne wyth alle hye myght. And thou shalt vnderstonde that god ordeyned fastyng. & to fastyng apperteyneth four thynges. largenes to poure folke. gladnes in herte. spirituall not be angryd ne to be annoyed ne to grutch for he fasteth. And also resonable hour for to ete by mesure þ is to say þ a man shold not ete in vntyme ne sytte the lenger at his table for he fasteth. Thine shalt thou vnderstonde that bodely peyn stondyth inyscyplyne or techyng by wrytyng. or by ensauple. Also in weryng of hyper or of stamyn. or of an habergeon on her naked flesshe for Crystis sake. and that suche maner penauuncis ne make not thy herte bytter or angry ne annoyed of thyself. for better is to cast away thyne heyre than to cast away the sweetenes of our lord Ihesu Cryst. And therefore sayth saynt Poule. Clothe you as they that ben chosen of god in herte. Of myserycorde. debonaeryte. suffraunce and suche maner of clothynge. In whiche Ihesu Cryst is more apayed than in an heyr or ha-

bergeon. Than is dyscypline eke in knockyng of thy brest in scourging wyth perdisyn knylyng. in tribulacions. in sufferyng pacyently wronges þ be do to him & eke in pacyent sufferyng of maladyes. or lesynges. or worldly catel. or wyf. or chylde. or other frendys. Thenne shalt thou vnderstonde whiche thynges destourben penauunce. And this is in thre maners that is drede. shame. and warshope that is desperacion. And for to speke of drede. for whiche he weneth he may suffer no penauunce. there apenst is remedye for to thynke that bodely penauunce is but short atte regarde of helle that is cruel and soo longe that it lastyth wythouten ende. Now apenst shame that a mā hath to shryue him. Shold a man thynke by waye of reason That he hath not be aschamed to doo foule thyng. Certes hym ought not to be aschamed to doo feir thynges and good thynges. And that is confessyons. A man shold thynke that god woot alle hys thoughtis and hys werkes and to hym mayenethyng be hyd ne couerpd. Men shold eke remembre hem of the shamethat is to come at the day off dometo hym that ben not penitent in this present lyf. for al the creaturis in heuene and in erthe and in hell shul see appently al that they hyden in this world. Now for to speke off hem that ben so necligent and slowe to shryue hem. it stondeth in two maners. That one is that he hopeth to lyue longe & for to purchasse moche



## The Persers Tale

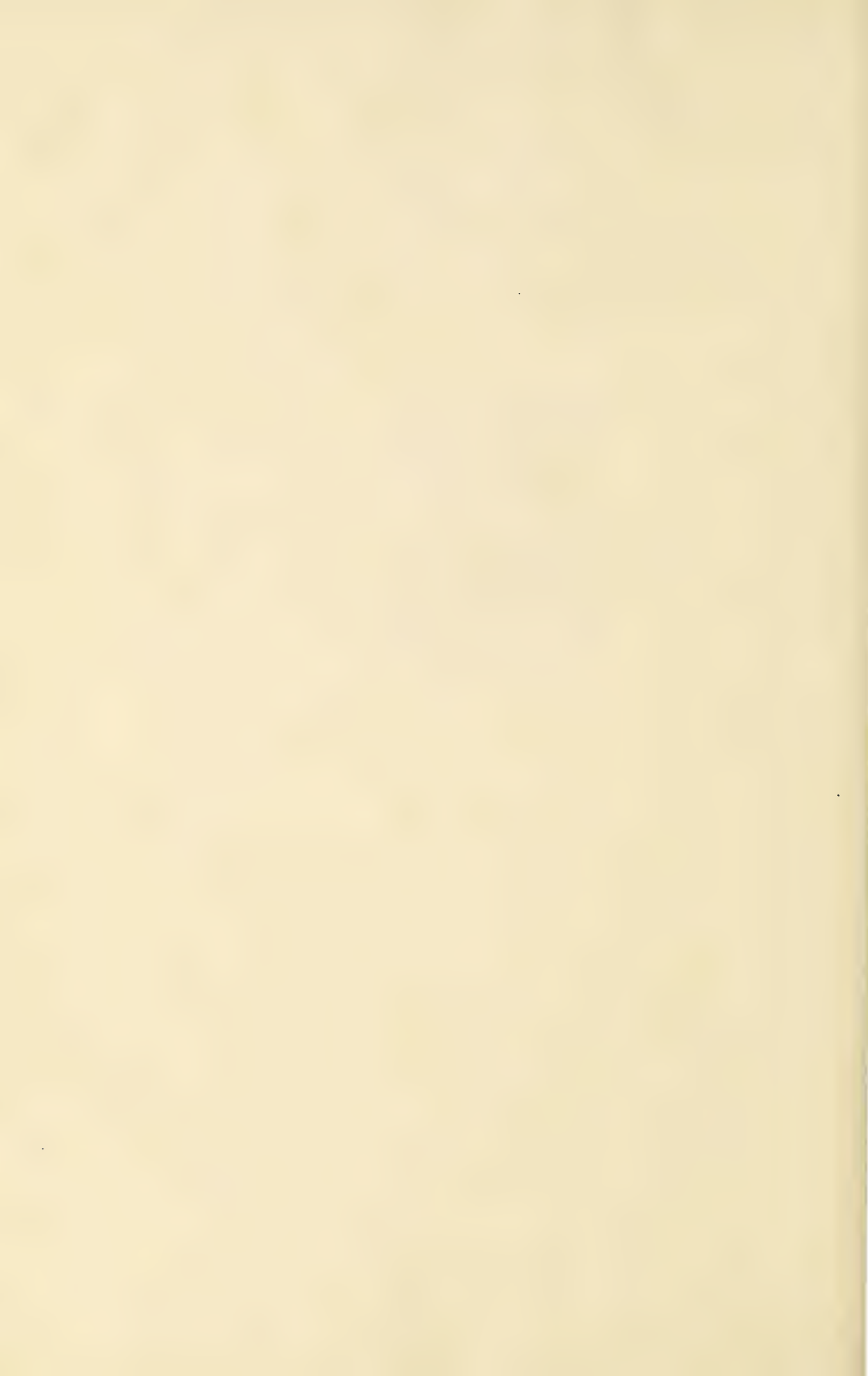
ryches for his deylte. And thenne wil  
 he shew hym as he sayth. he may  
 as hym semeth tynely ynow come  
 to shifte. Another is the surquydrye  
 that he hath in Crystes mercy. And  
 ayenst the first he shal thynke þe  
 lye is in no spkeres. And eke that  
 alle the riches of the world is in auer-  
 ture and passyng as a shadowe on  
 a wal. As sayth saynt Gregore that  
 it apperteyneth to the grete rightwis-  
 nesse of god. that neuer shal the pe-  
 ne stynte of them þe neuer wold with-  
 drawe hem fro synne her thankyes  
 but ever cōtynued in synne. for that  
 perpetuel wyl to do synne that. they  
 haue perpetuel payne. wanhope is  
 in two maners. The first wanhope  
 is in the mercy of god. That other is  
 that they thinke that they may not  
 longe perseuere in goodnes. The  
 first wanhope comyth of that he des-  
 meth that he hath synned so grete-  
 ly so ofte. and so longe leyn in synne þe  
 he shal not be sau'd. Certes ayenst  
 that cursyd wanhope he shold thyn-  
 ke that the passyon of Ihesu Cryst  
 is more stronge to vnbrynde than sin-  
 ne is to bynde. And ayenst the secon-  
 de wanhope he shal thynke þe as ofte  
 as he sayleth. he shal aryse by peny-  
 tence. And though he neuer so longe  
 haue leyn in synne. The mercy of  
 Cryst is alway redy to receyue hym  
 to mercy. Ayenst that wanhope that  
 he shold not longe perseuere in good-  
 nes he shal thynke that the febyltes  
 of the deuyll may no thyng doo but

men wol suffre hym. And eke he shal  
 haue strengthe of god and of alle hys  
 chirche and of the protection of aun-  
 gels yf hym lyst. Thanne shul men  
 vnderstonde what is the fruyt of pe-  
 naunce. & after the word of Ihu crist  
 It is endeles blysse of heuene. There  
 ioye hath no contrary opyte of woo-  
 ne greuaunce there alle harmys be  
 past of this present lye there as is sy-  
 kernes fro the paynes of helle. there  
 as is the blessyd compaignie that re-  
 ioyse euermore eueriche of ioyes. Jo-  
 ye. there as the body of mā that why-  
 lom was soule & derke is more clere  
 than the sonne. there as whylom the  
 body was seke and frell. feble and  
 mortal. Is immortal & soo stronge &  
 soo hool that ther may no thyng en-  
 payre it. there as nether is hunger ne  
 thurst ne colde. but euery soule reple-  
 nessyd wth the spght of the par-  
 spght knowyng of the trinite. This  
 blessyd regne may man purchase by  
 pouert spyrtyuel & the glorie by low-  
 nesse. the plente of Joye by hunger  
 and thurst. And the reste by trauayll.  
 and the lye by deeth and mortyfycaciō  
 of synne. To that lye he be-  
 brynge that bought vs wth hys pre-  
 cious blood ACHEN.



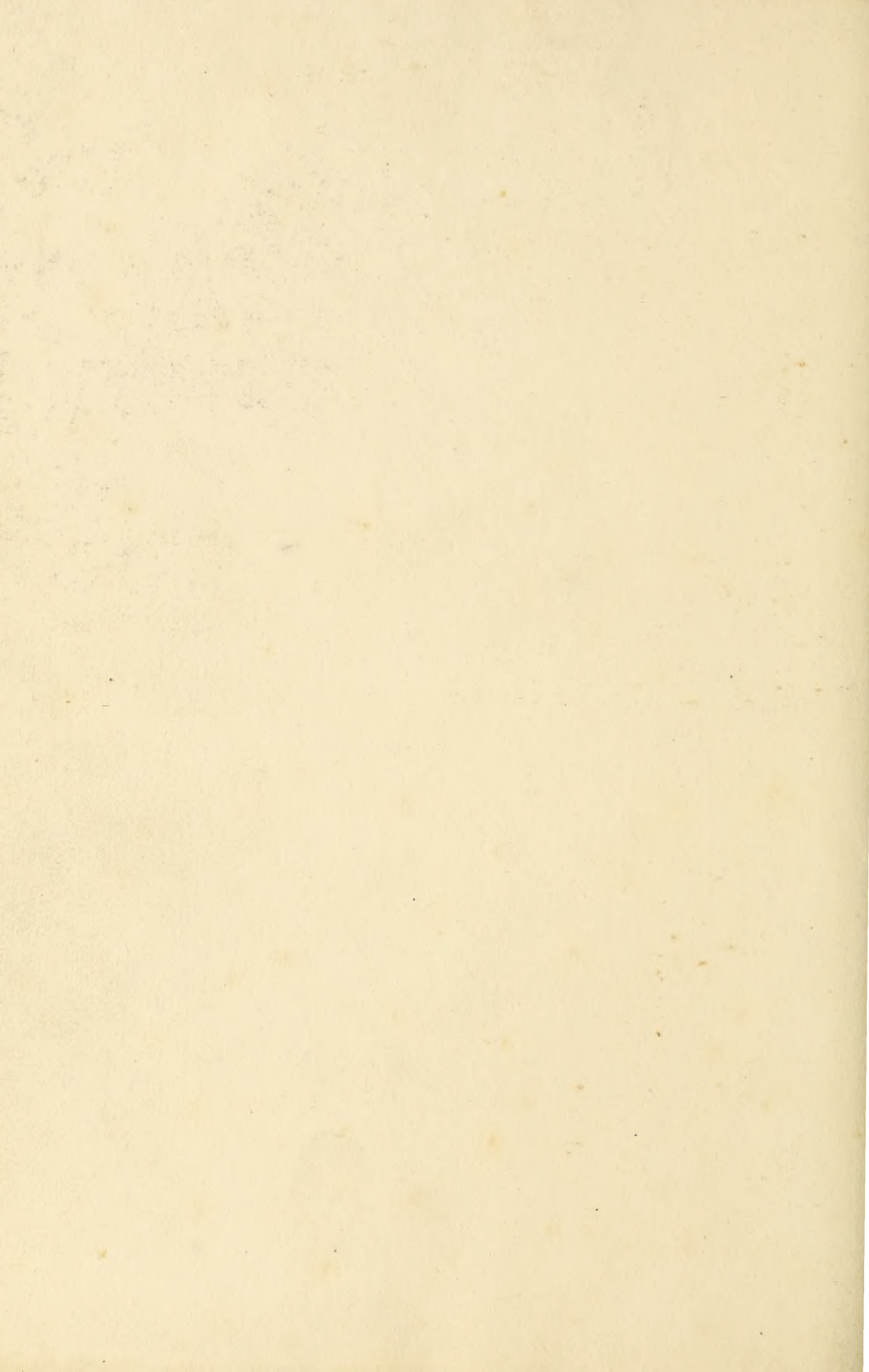














9/4/23

$a_{1-2}$ ,  $I_1$  and  $I_8$   $K_{1-5}$  in  
facsimile.

$K_6$  a blank, cut away

$ad_3$  of  $bb_6$  a little defective  
wormed in places, particularly  
at the commencement  
Some ll. mended.

Otherwise perfect  
for B. L. varitch ~~for~~  
B. L. varitch

13. 1. 22.



